LUFTWAFFE COLOURS

CLASSICOLOURS

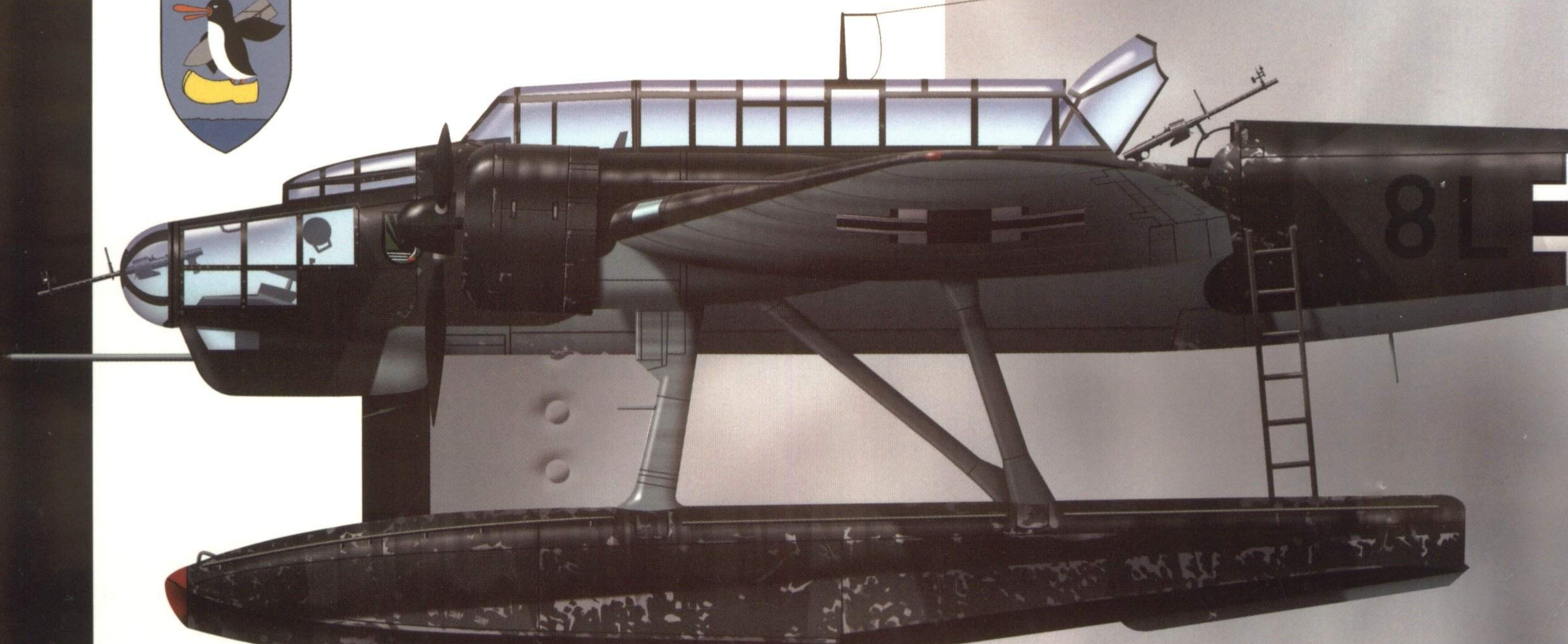
SEA EAGLES

Volume One

Chris Goss

LUFTWAFFE ANTI-SHIPPING UNITS

1939-41



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Publisher's Note

The study of Luftwaffe camouflage and markings is a complex subject compounded by a general lack of quality colour photographs. Inevitably, therefore, most photographs appearing in this series are black and white and, while the authors and publisher have offered their own assessments of the aircraft colours in these photographs, this naturally involved a degree of guesswork. This should always be considered, even when the use of 'believed to have been' or 'thought to have been' etc, has sometimes been deleted in order to avoid tedious repetition. Recognising that readers may have contrary opinions, we have endeavoured throughout Classic Colours to include as many photographs and as much associated information as possible so that, although the photograph captions, colour profiles and badges have been produced in accordance with the publisher's, authors' and artist's best interpretations, the reader may, if he wishes, reach his own conclusions. Furthermore it should be stressed that the personal accounts contained in this series are as they have been related to the authors and are the product of the individual pilot's personal recollections.

About the Author

Chris Goss is a serving Royal Air Force officer who has studied the 1939-1945 air war for many years and in this regard he has amassed a substantial collection of original wartime material as a result of interviews and extensive correspondence with veterans and their families. His books such as *Bloody Biscay*, *Brothers in Arms* and *Luftwaffe Fighter-Bombers over Britain* have been critically acclaimed for their research. He holds an MA with Merit in War Studies and lives in England with his wife and three daughters.

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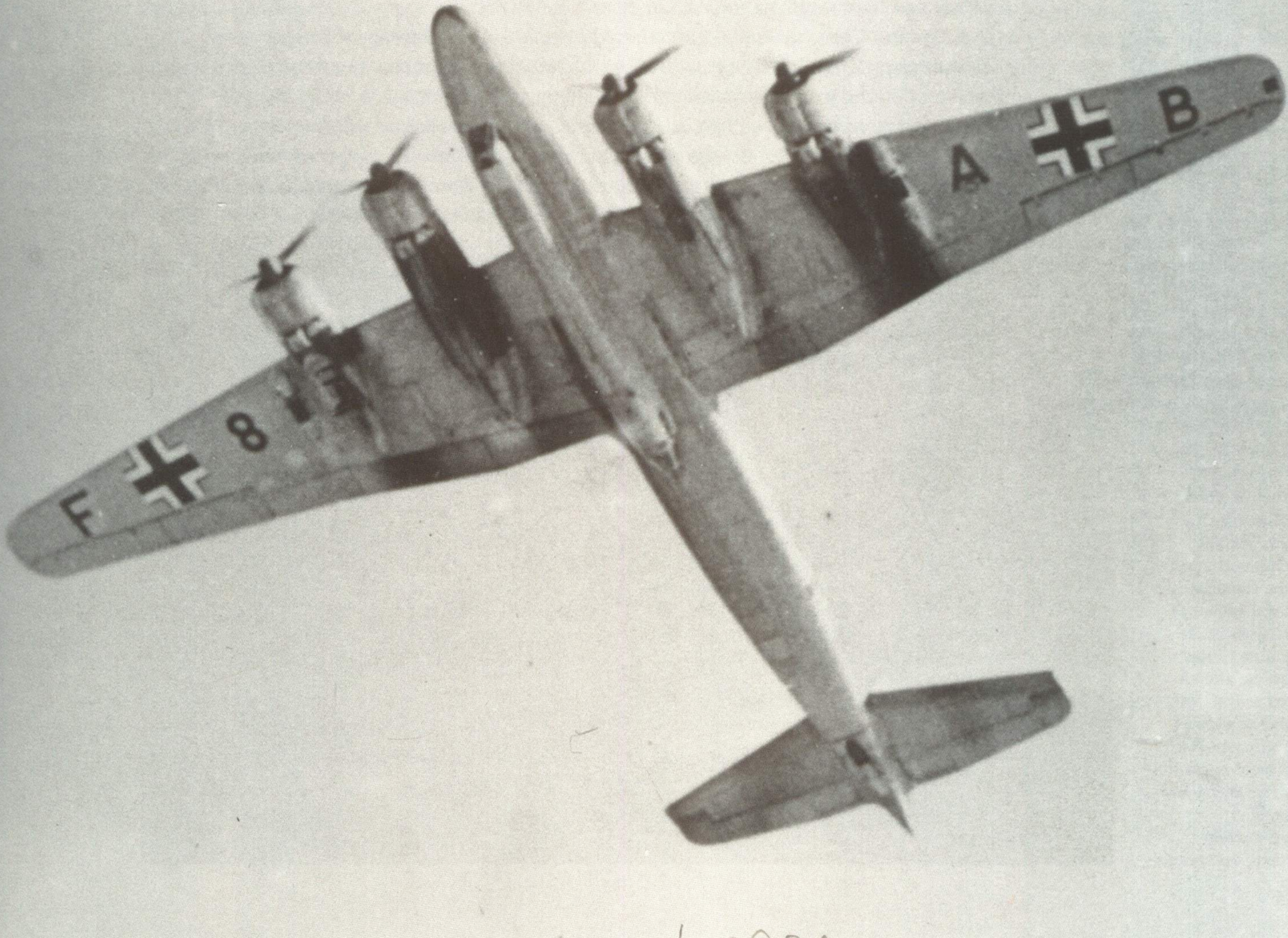
LUFTWAFFE ANTI-SHIPPING UNITS

1939 1941

"… in no other area is so great a volume of essential shipping moved with such regularity and such concentration over such clearly defined shipping lanes as in the coastal areas around Great Britain. Systematic operations against these targets would therefore in my opinion have had the most favourable indirect effect on our positions on other fronts…

"You will perhaps reply that the results of the fight against shipping in my own area have left much to be desired. Strictly speaking, you are right, but measured against the resources available to me, I regard them as very encouraging…"

Generalleutnant Ulrich Kessler, Fliegerführer Atlantik, referring to
anti-shipping and maritime operations conducted during the winter of 1940/41,
as quoted in a letter to Generaloberst Hans Jeschonnnek, 5 September 1943

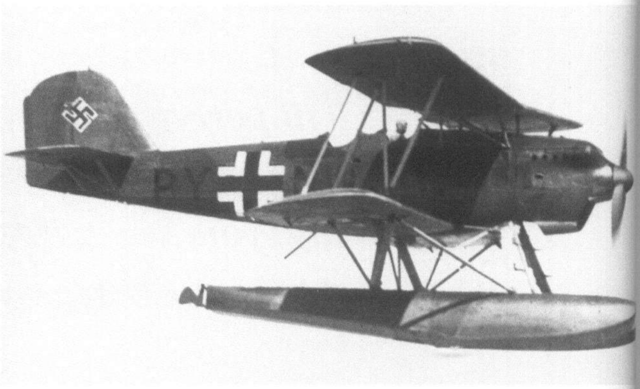


Genesis – 1939

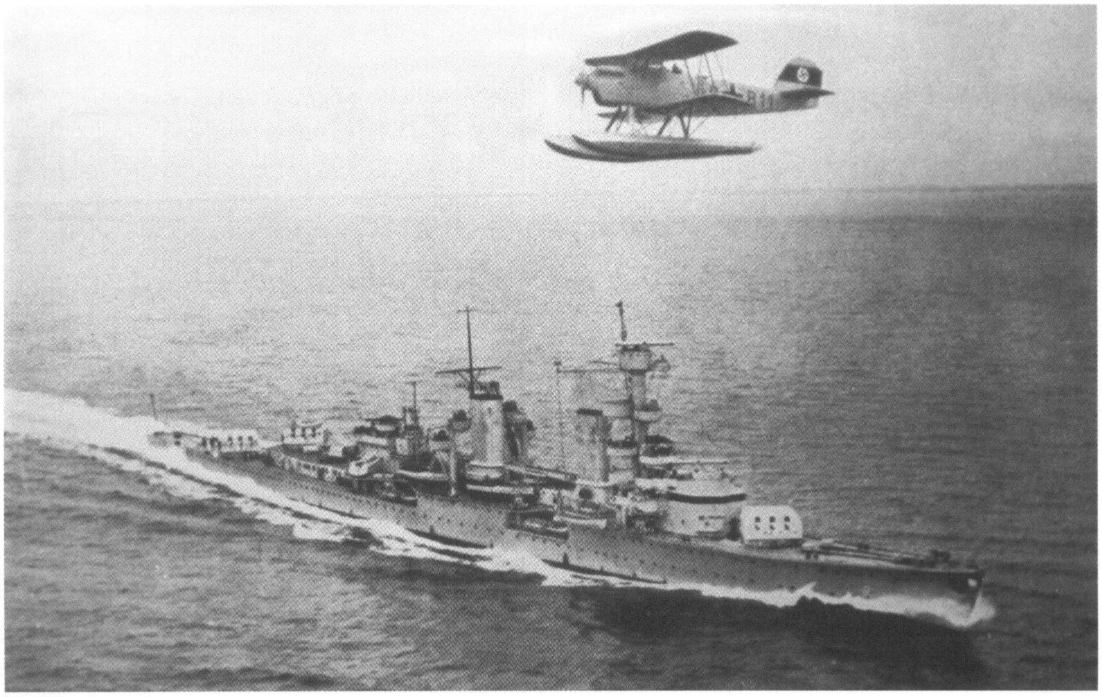
By the start of the Second World War, the *Luftwaffe* was starting to think more about developing an offensive maritime air force. The lessons learned in the Spanish Civil War gave all but a few officers little impetus to this thinking – the *Luftwaffe's* senior officers were still convinced of a strong bomber force, defended by fighters, supporting a major land campaign; anything maritime-related was the domain and concern of the *Kriegsmarine*. So it was that the only aircraft involved in maritime operations as such were the Heinkel He 59, He 60, He 115 and Dornier Do 18 float and seaplanes of various *Küstenfliegergruppen,* all aircraft of limited range and weaponry, some of which were approaching obsolescence at the outbreak of war, and whose sole task was to act as the airborne eyes of the *Kriegsmarine*. Commanded by *Führer der Seeluftstreitkräfte*, (Commander of the Naval Air Forces), subordinate to *General der Luftwaffe beim Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine,* secondary tasks for these aircraft were of a limited offensive nature – minelaying and very limited experimental torpedo operations. As a result, maritime aircraft were restricted to the Baltic and North Sea and the aircraft equipping the seven *Küstenfliegergruppen* with limited offensive operations, Kü.Fl.Gr. 106, 406, 506, 606, 706, 806 and 906, were deemed by the *Kriegsmarine* to be more than adequate for its needs.

However, by summer 1939, there was a school of thought within the *Luftwaffe* that a defensive capability existed for modern bombers to attack enemy naval forces which could pose a threat to either the German coastline or German shipping; it also followed that such forces could be used offensively against enemy harbours and other coastal targets. It was clear that the *Kriegsmarine* would not give up its assets and in any case, there was little chance of the majority of its current aircraft reaching an enemy harbour, dropping a worthwhile bomb load with any degree of accuracy and then returning unscathed or at least having the ability to defend itself against enemy *Flak* and fighters. Thus, in April 1939, *General* Hans Geisler was appointed as *General zur besonderer Verwendung* (General with Special Duties), based at Kiel-Holtenau in northern Germany, to form an embryonic offensive maritime air arm under the aegis of *Luftflotte* 2.

Forty-eight year-old Hans Geisler was an experienced naval man, having served in the *Kriegsmarine* in the First World War. Promoted to *Korvettenkapitän,* he was one of the first commanders of the *Funkversuchskommando* (experimental wireless detachment) at Warnemünde, not surprisingly co-located with the Warnemünde *Verkehrsfliegerschule* ('civilian' flying school) and it is believed that he



ABOVE: This He 60 D-1 has b re-painted in the Luftwaffe splinte pattern camouf of the two green RLM 70/71 on th uppersurfaces a light blue 65 underneath. The machine still carries the factor radio call sign, PY+NW, in black



RIGHT: A He 60 carrying a pre-war military code of 60+B11, overflying a German light cruiser in either the Baltic or the North Sea. The aircraft is painted in the standard pre-war colour of RLM Grau 02. At this time German maritime aircraft acted as the 'airborne eyes' of the Kriegsmarine and were restricted to mine laying and limited experimental torpedo operations.

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like many other Naval officers, transferred to the *Luftwaffe* in 1933. Two other naval officers who transferred with him would also prove to be instrumental in taking forward similar thinking – *Korvettenkapitän* Joachim Coeler and *Leutnant zur See* Martin Harlinghausen.

The outbreak of war gave an added impetus to Geisler and his staff. His command was upgraded to 10. *Fliegerdivision* and hostilities gave him the chance to put some of his theories into practice. Geisler's Operations Officer was 38 year-old *Major* Martin Harlinghausen who had been involved in maritime aviation since 1931 when he first served under Hans Geisler at Warnemünde. His first command was as *Staffel Kapitän* of 1. *Seestaffel* in 1934 before a number of years as a staff officer in Berlin. In 1937, he was given command of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506 at Dievenow flying the Heinkel He 59 but shortly afterwards was transferred to be *Kommandeur* of AS 88 flying Heinkel He 59s out of Mallorca in support of German forces engaged in the Spanish Civil War. This now gave Harlinghausen the chance to formulate theories for maritime operations – attack methods against land, coastal and shipping targets, weaponry and operations by night. He quickly became regarded as '*der taktische Lehrmeister im Krieg aus der Luft auf Seeziele*'[1] and on his return to Germany in March 1939, soon found himself working for Hans Geisler.

ABOVE: Oberstleutnant i.G. Martin Harlinghausen (right) with Hauptmann Walter Oesau, the accomplished fighter pilot and Kommandeur of III./JG 3. This photograph was probably taken in early 1941 shortly after both men had been awarded the Eichenlaube to the Ritterkreuz. Harlinghausen had served as Staffelkapitän of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506 at Dievenow in 1937, before taking command of AS/88 – Aufklärungsgruppe 88 – the maritime reconnaissance unit of the Legion Condor during the Spanish Civil War. Following his service in Spain, he was appointed as Chief-of-Staff of the newly formed X. Fliegerkorps in Hamburg which co-ordinated the operations of KG 26 and KG 30, bomber units specialising in maritime missions. In March 1941, he was appointed Fliegerführer Atlantik with specific responsibility for waging war against Allied shipping from the North Sea to the Bay of Biscay and out to the Atlantic. He later served as a Fliegerführer in Tunisia in 1942 and commanded II. Fliegerkorps in the Mediterranean during the first half of 1943.

As such, 10. *Fliegerdivision* (changing on 3 October 1939 to X. *Fliegerkorps*) had no offensive forces but these soon began appearing piecemeal. Initially, Geisler was assigned the Heinkel He 111-equipped I./KG 26, commanded by *Obstlt.* Hans Alefeld followed in October 1939 by II./KG 26, commanded by *Obstlt.* Hans Hefele (who had been Harlinghausen's predecessor as *Kommandeur* of AS 88). A further unit would be assigned to him at the end of September 1939 as *Oblt.* Henno Schlockermann, one of its pilots, recalled:

"About 10 or 12 experienced pilots had been detached to the Erprobungskommando *88 at Rechlin to help test the Junkers 88 which was just leaving the production lines in Spring 1939. When war was declared, this group formed I./KG 30* [it was initially designated I./KG 25] *commanded by* Hptm *Helmut Pohle and was reinforced by officers from the* Lehrgeschwader. *A few months later we were transferred to Sylt and from there flew missions over the North Sea and Firth of Forth. In my* Staffel *was* Ogefr. *Karl Franke, who was actually the leading engineer for airframes at Rechlin. He became known as the one who sank HMS* Ark Royal *and was promoted to* Leutnant *as a result. He always refused to confirm this success and always maintained that he had been unable to see because of the high speed of the dive and on pulling up had disappeared rapidly into cloud!"*

The attack which allegedly sank HMS *Ark Royal* and which resulted in considerable propaganda occurred on 26 September 1939, just four days after the official formation of I./KG 30. Although the aircraft carrier was lightly damaged, as opposed to sunk, it proved that warships were vulnerable to air attack and reinforced the decision to develop a dedicated anti-shipping arm of the *Luftwaffe*. Nearly three weeks later, I./KG 30, buoyed by the earlier success, attacked warships in the Firth of Forth. Nine Junkers 88s were assigned during which the light cruiser HMS *Southampton* was hit by a bomb which failed to explode whilst the light cruiser HMS *Edinburgh* and destroyer HMS *Mohawk* were lightly damaged. However, the attack cost two Junkers 88s when the formation was intercepted by Spitfires of 602 and 603 Squadrons – the *Gruppen Kommandeur, Hptm.* Pohle was the only survivor from his crew whilst *Oblt.* Siegmund Storp, *Staffel Kapitän* of 1/KG 30 and two of his crew were taken prisoner; a third bomber, flown by *Lt.* Horst von Reisen, only just made it back as he later recalled:

BELOW: Hauptmann Gerhard Metzentin, Staffelkapitän of 8./KG 30 and Oberleutnant Henno Schlockermann, Staffelkapitän of 7./KG 30 enjoy some down-time from operations. Metzentin is no doubt getting re-acquainted with that universal friend of all combat pilots, his dog, whilst Schlockermann is handling a much prized Luftwaffe Leica camera.

"When we arrived over Rosyth, we found HMS Hood *safely in dock where we were not allowed to harm her. Just to the east of the Forth Bridge there were some small warships and I decided to attack one of these. I selected one and carried out a diving attack but scored only a near miss.*

"Then, as I was climbing away, my Bordfunker *suddenly shouted over the intercom that there were several fighters about two kilometres away and diving on us. I looked in the direction he was pointing and as soon as I saw them, I knew that I would need all the speed I could possibly squeeze*

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[1] The Tactical Head of Training for Air War against Maritime Targets

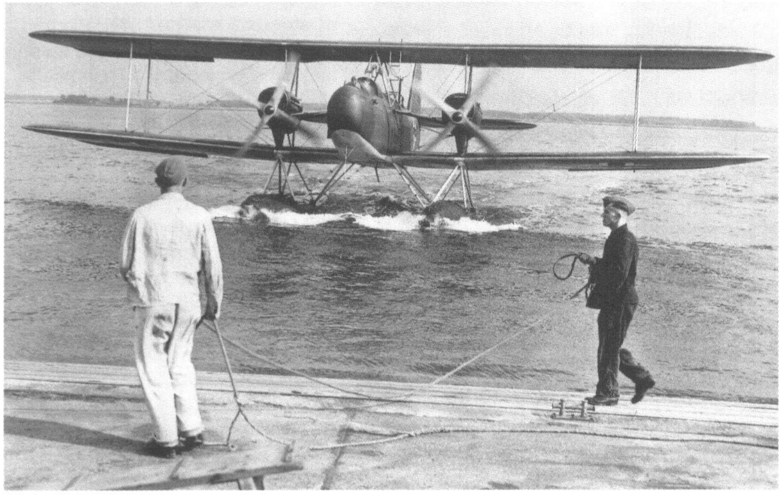
out of my Junkers if we were to escape. I pushed down the nose and, throttles wide open, dived for the sea. But it was no good. The Spitfires had the advantage of speed and height from the start and they soon caught up with us. As I sped down the Firth of Forth just a few metres above the surface, I could see clearly the splashes from the shells from the shore batteries as they too joined in the unequal battle.

"Now I thought I was finished. Guns were firing at me from all sides and the Spitfires behind seemed to be taking turns at attacking but I think my speed gave all of them a bit of surprise – I was doing more than 250 mph which must have been somewhat faster than any bomber they had trained against at low level and of course I jinked from side to side to make their aim as difficult as possible. At one stage in the pursuit, I remember looking down and seeing what looked like raindrops hitting the water. It was all very strange – then I realised what it was: those splashes marked the impact of bullets being aimed at me from above!

"I had only one ally: time. Every minute longer the Junkers kept going meant another seven kilometres further out to sea and further from the Spitfires' base and I had far more fuel to play with than they did. Finally the inevitable happened. After a chase of more than 20 minutes, there was a sudden 'phooff' and my starboard engine suddenly disappeared from view in a cloud of steam. One of the enemy bullets had pierced the radiator releasing vital coolant and without it, the engine was finished. There was no alternative but to shut it down.

"My speed sagged to 112 mph (almost on the stall when flying asymmetric) and we were only a few metres above the waves. Now the Junkers was a lame duck but when I looked round, expecting to see the Spitfires curving in to finish us off, there was no sign of them. They had turned round and gone home."

If conventional bombing attacks against shipping seemed promising, torpedo operations were less so. By October 1939, the Heinkel He 59-equipped 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 406, 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506 and 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 706 had a limited capability for airborne torpedoes. The He 59 was slow and vulnerable whilst it was felt that the Heinkel He 115 was too fast for launching torpedoes! The only successful recorded torpedo attacks for 1939 occurred on 7 November and 18 December, the latter resulting in the sinking of the fishing steamer *Active* off Rattray Head. However, because of the ineffectiveness on the F5 torpedo, production was halted whilst arguments followed as to whether it was the *Luftwaffe* or *Kriegsmarine* which had primacy in torpedo operations.



ABOVE: A He 59 D approaches the docking ramp.

At the same time as 10. *Fliegerdivision* had begun developing aircraft for offensive maritime air operations, a similar band of German officers in the *Seeluftstreitskrafte* were championing the use of aircraft for minelaying. In April 1939, at the same time as *General* Hans Geisler was starting to develop his ideas on the employment of offensive maritime aircraft, *General* Joachim Coeler, the new *Führer der Seeluftstreitskrafte,* was starting to develop similar ideas for aerial sea mining. Yet again, Coeler met with opposition from the *Kriegsmarine*, as it would be losing aircraft, aircraft still regarded as its own, from protecting their ships and acting as their eyes. Undaunted, Coeler set about forming dedicated sea mining units but it would appear that by the time war was declared, he was still very much tied to the *Kriegsmarine.* This can be shown by the *Luftwaffe* Order of Battle for 1 September 1939 which saw Coeler as *Führer der Luft Ost* based at Dievenow with elements of the Heinkel He 60 and He 59-equipped Kü.Fl.Gr. 506 (commanded by *Obstlt.* Wolfgang von Wild) and the He 60-equipped Kü.Fl.Gr. 706 (commanded by *Obstlt.* Hermann Edert). *Führer der Luft Ost* was, with *GenMaj.* Hermann Bruch's *Luft West,* subordinate to *GenMaj.* Hans Ritter's (*General der Luftwaffe beim Oberbefehlshaber der Kriegsmarine*) *Seefliegerverbände.* Also commanded by Ritter were *Generaladmiral* Saalwächter's *Marinegruppe West* and *Generaladmiral* Conrad Albrecht's *Marinegruppe Ost.*

Operations in Poland, albeit limited, showed the effectiveness of aircraft against maritime and maritime related targets. For example, during the night of 2/3 September 1939, 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506, commanded by *Hptm.* Heinz Seebens, attacked targets in and around the harbour at Gdynia which allowed German destroyers to destroy coastal batteries the following day. More conventional bombers in the form of *Hptm.* Josef Kögl's IV.(*Stuka*)/LG 1 had already shown the vulnerability of ships to aircraft by badly damaging the minelayer *Gryf* and gunboat *General Haller*, the *Gryf* later being sunk by *Hptm.* Stein's 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 706.

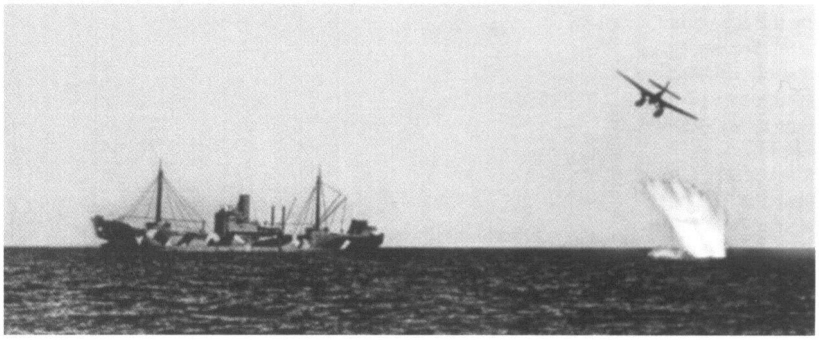
It would appear that following the successful campaign in Poland, authority to commence mining was granted and limited mining missions were flown against the seas off the east coast of Britain. At the same time, a number of changes occurred – *Führer der Luft Ost* was redesignated *Führer der Luft West* and comprised the Heinkel He 115-equipped Kü.Fl.Gr. 106 at Norderney (together with the Heinkel He 59-equipped 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506 and 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 706), the Dornier 18-equipped Kü.Fl.Gr. 306 at Hörnum (together with 2./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506 and 2./Kü.Fl.Gr. 606), with Kü.Fl.Gr. 406, with its Heinkel He 60 and He 115s, based at List/Sylt. Even then, these units were predominantly engaged on reconnaissance duties as the first recorded combat between *Führer der Luft West's* aircraft and the RAF's Coastal Command proved.

At 0450 hours on 5 September 1939, eight Heinkel He 115s from *Hptm.* Friedrich-Franz von Schrötter's 1./Kü.Fl.Gr. 106 lifted off from Norderney on a *Fächeraufklärung*, literally a fanned reconnaissance, covering the centre of the North Sea from as far north as the Firth of Forth, down as far as Spurn Head. At the same time, 12 Avro Ansons from 206 Squadron took off from Bircham Newton in Norfolk to carry out the RAF equivalent – a parallel line search in the North Sea. The German crews reported little – *LtzS.* Gaul reported spotting a British reconnaissance aircraft at 0645 hours and a British bomber at 0706 hours. *LtzS.* Werner Happe reported an unidentified ship headed 190 degrees at 0650 hours, whilst *LtzS.* Wächter reported two ships – one at 0630 hours headed 70 degrees and a Norwegian freighter headed 200 degrees at 0900 hours. It appeared that despite the effort, there was little to report, but at about 0930 hours, the Heinkel He 115 coded M2+FH commanded by *LtzS.* Bruno Bättger, radioed that it had destroyed a British bomber and had captured one of the crew. They had literally bumped into an Anson flown by Plt Off Lawrence Edwards and a 15 minute dogfight ensued in which the Anson's gunner, LAC John Quilter, was seriously wounded and during subsequent attempts to cripple the Heinkel He 115 by using the fixed forward-firing gun, the Anson was shot down by the Heinkel's gunner and exploded shortly after hitting the water. The German floatplane then landed and picked up the seriously injured Edwards; there was no trace of the rest of the RAF crew.

The first mining mission, presumed to have been carried out by Heinkel He 59s of the newly formed 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 906, occurred off Harwich on 18 November 1939 with a follow-up mission occurring two days later. By the start of December 1939, mining missions were starting to involve more units. For example, Heinkel He 115s of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 106, 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 906 and 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506 launched 29 aircraft to lay mines in the Thames and Humber estuaries and off Harwich on the night of 6 December 1939 – one aircraft from 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506, commanded by *ObltzS.* Wolfgang Wodtke, was lost when it collided with a radar mast at West Beckham near Sherringham on the Norfolk coast; two Heinkel He 59s of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 106 and a further He 115 of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506 were also lost in accidents. A subsequent mission on the following night resulted in four more He 59s being lost or badly damaged in accidents which prompted a temporary halt in mining operations.

For the remainder of 1939, mining and offensive bombing operations were very limited, successes being overshadowed by the vulnerability of the seaplanes. For example on 21 October 1939, 1/406 took off with nine Heinkel He 115s to bomb a convoy off Flamborough Head. At 1550 hours the report was received that they had reached the convoy, off the Humber Estuary, but that they were encountering heavy *Flak* and fighters. Unfortunately for the float plane crews, the defences had already been alerted by an ineffective attack by three Junkers 88s of I./KG 30 – Hurricanes of 46 Squadron claimed to have destroyed four Heinkel He 115s 30 miles east of Withernsea, whilst Spitfires of 72 Squadron damaged a further four float planes commanded by *ObltzS.* Peinemann, Schlicht and Reiman and *LtzS* Lenz respectively were quickly shot down, the remaining aircraft returning with varying degrees of damage.

The failure of 21 October 1939 looked as if it had played into the *Kriegsmarine*'s hands. Two days later, *Grossadmiral* Erich



BELOW: Here the crew of a Heinkel He 115 hone their skills in the art of torpedoing against a target training ship.

Raeder gave Adolf Hitler a status report on the 21 October 1939 attack. The following day, discussions followed during which *Reichsmarschall* Hermann Göring rejected the notion that aircraft assigned to the *Kriegsmarine* would be engaged in offensive missions. He stated that in future, reconnaissance of British coastal waters should be carried out by X. *Fliegerkorps* itself, with all but six long-range reconnaissance *Staffeln* and nine multi-purpose mine *Staffeln* remaining with *Oberbefehlshaber der Kriegsmarine* for missions over the North Sea and its approaches; all other maritime units would transfer to X. *Fliegerkorps.*

Still Raeder did not give up and in another personal letter of 31 October 1939 he tried to convince Göring to change his mind. In his opinion, it would be necessary for the *Marineflieger* to carry out reconnaissance as well as combat missions even near the enemy coast to support own naval forces, e.g. anti-submarine, mining and anti-shipping sorties. Raeder demanded the re-equipment of *Marineflieger* units with the proposed Dornier 217 and insisted on his earlier request for 24 *Küstenfliegerstaffeln*. He also wrote that it would be a necessity to have a single, integrated combat command for this theatre of war which would be called *Gruppenbefehlshaber Nordsee.*

Göring's answer on 15 November 1939 left Raeder in no doubt as to the *Luftwaffe's* intentions. The Dornier 217, still in its development stage, was reserved for X *Fliegerkorps* whilst the Heinkel He 115 would be adequate for close-range reconnaissance and flying boats should be used for long-range reconnaissance. The number of units under *Kriegsmarine* command should be limited to six (later in November increased to nine) reconnaissance *Staffeln* and nine minelaying *Staffeln*, because the *Luftwaffe* had now taken over most of the tasks earlier carried out by the *Kriegsmarine*. This would be sufficient for reconnaissance, escort and patrol missions. As a result, on 11 December 1939, X. *Fliegerkorps* was at last able to issue new guidelines for the employment of its aircraft against naval targets. It was allowed to attack every ship sailing under enemy flag, neutral ships sailing under enemy escort, armed ships, or ships which names or home ports were hidden. Specifically, KG 26 was assigned to attack merchant ships and KG 30 was to attack warships.

The war of words initiated by the *Kriegsmarine* had resulted in the opposite to what was intended. No longer would Hans Geisler and Joachim Coeler have to seek permission from the *Kriegsmarine* for each mission. The older types of minelaying aircraft now began to be replaced by more modern Heinkel He 111 and Dornier 17s. By February 1940, Coeler, like Geisler, was made a divisional commander and appointed to lead the newly formed 9. *Fliegerdivision* with specific responsibility for minelaying; the grip that the *Kriegsmarine* had over maritime aircraft was rapidly slipping away and the *Luftwaffe* could now start developing its tactics and operational doctrine unhindered. However, the year ahead would still remain a difficult one for the *Luftwaffe's* offensive maritime operations.

D
2325
5
D-2325
D
2215

RIGHT: He 60 B, W.Nr. 416, was registered D-2325 in December 1932 to the RDL (Reichsverband der Deutchen Luftfahrtindustrie, Berlin) at the Erprobungsstelle Travemünde - the marine testing facility at Travemünde on the Baltic coast. By mid-1936 the BMW V1-powered He 60 began to equip a number of the fledgling Kusten-fliegergruppen. By the the end of 1937 four such Staffeln existed equipped with the type as well as two shipboard Bordflieger-gruppen. The aircraft behind the He 60 is a He 59 registered in June 1932 as D-2215 W.Nr. 379.

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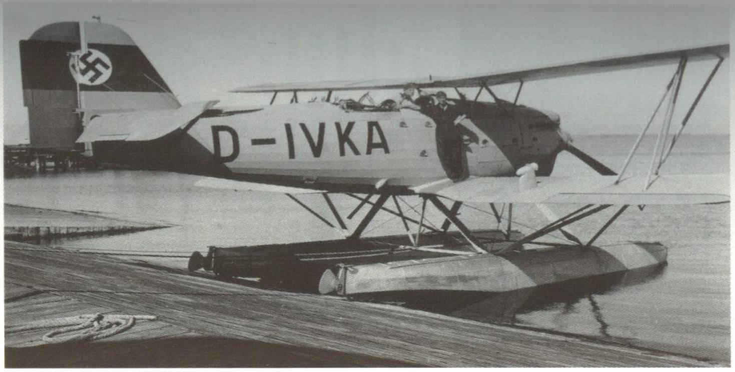
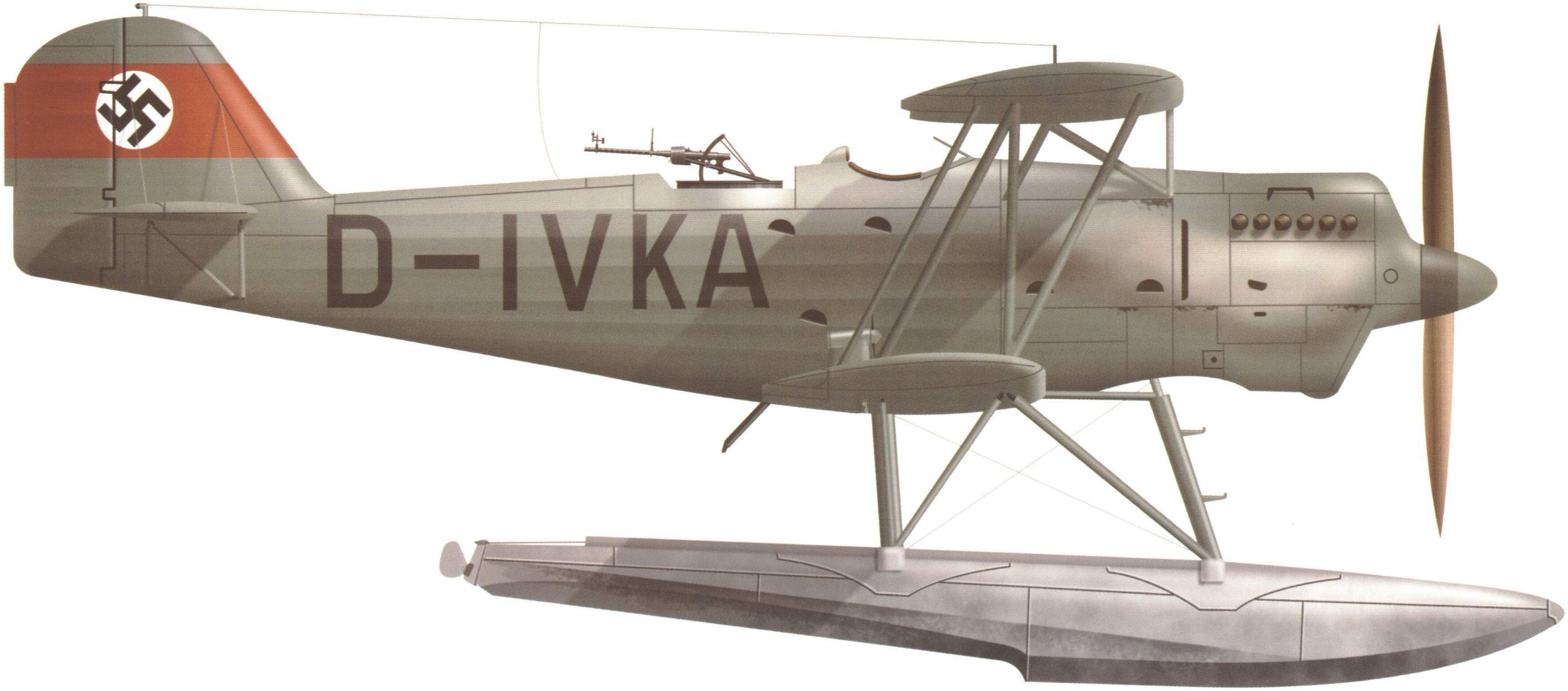
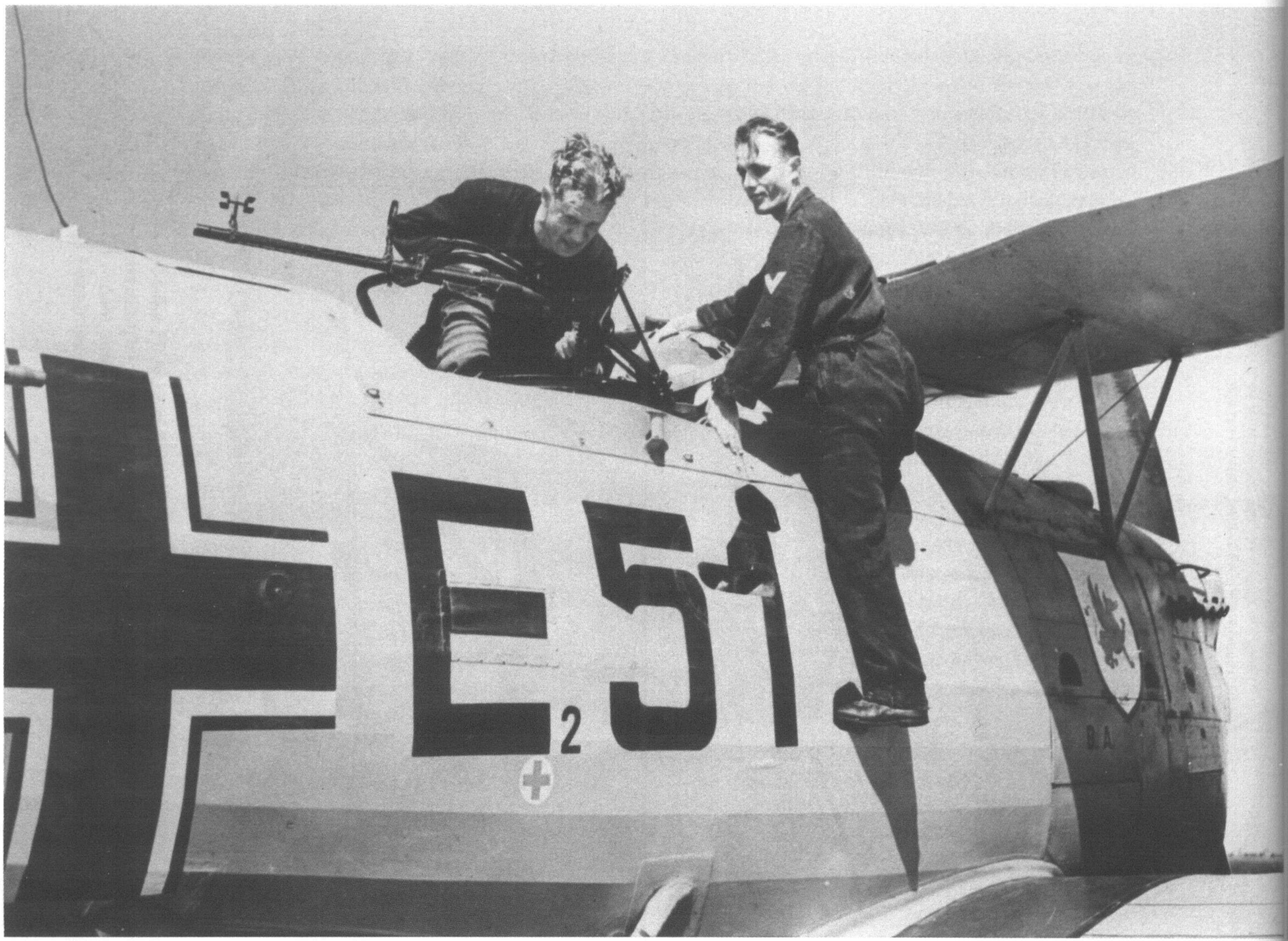


LEFT: On 20 March 1934, the civil code 'D' followed by a number was replaced with D- followed by four letters. This brand new He 60, D-IVKA, seen in overall 63 for the main airframe, is seen tied up on the slipway at Berg am Rügen on the Baltic coast in 1936. The floats are left in bare metal with anti-fouling under surfaces.



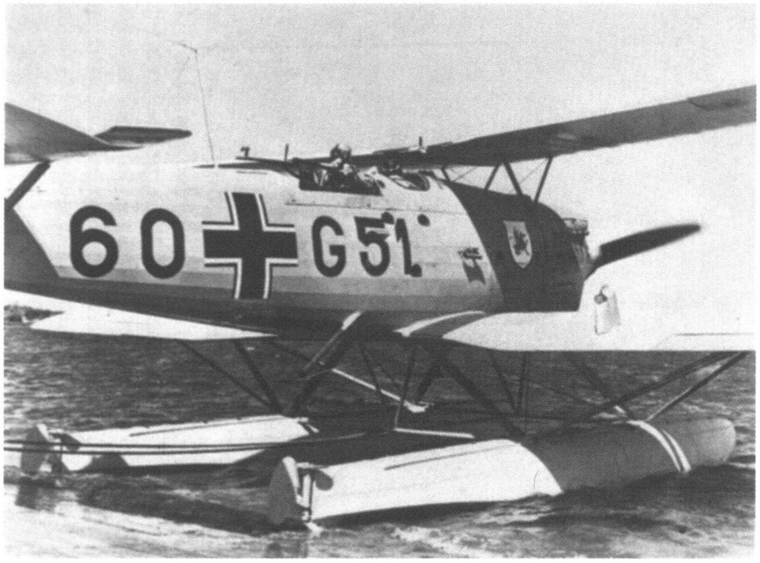
Heinkel He 60 C, D-IVKA, Berg am Rügen, ca 1936

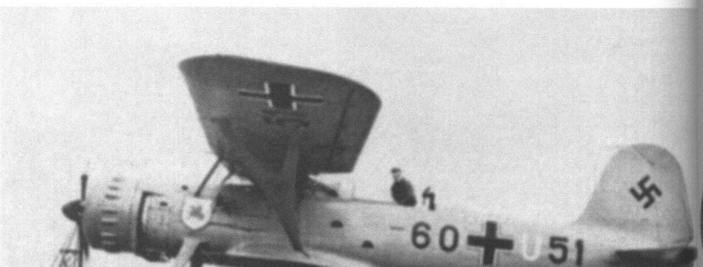
This aircraft was painted overall in RLM 63 which was similar in colour to RLM Grey 02, with the floats being coated in RLM 01 silver. The civil code, D-IVKA, painted in black indicates that the aircraft was in use up to the time the new Luftwaffe was formally introduced to the world. The civil code would be replaced by a unit code, although the overall colours would have remained. The full code was also carried across the top and underside of the wings and was painted in black. The Hakenkreuz was painted on a white disc superimposed on a horizontal red stripe on both sides of the fin and rudder.



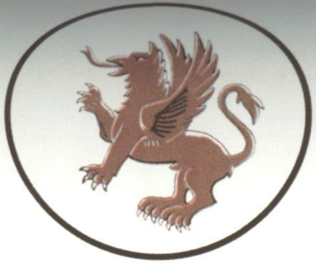
ABOVE: A close-up of an He 60 C, with the pre-war unit code 60+E51 of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 506 at Dievenow in 1938. The early style narrow Balkenkreuz is clearly shown against the RLM Grau 02 overall colour. Note the small '2' after t individual aircraft letter 'E' which probably denotes either the second machin carrying the same aircraft code or possibly a replacement aircraft bearing the same code. The machine also carries the 'Griffon' unit emblem on the forward fuselage painted with the griffon in either red or brown on a white shield outlined in blue.

BELOW: The pilot of this Heinkel He 60 C-1, coded 60+G51, of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 506 has just started his engine and is preparing to move off – however note the mooring line still attached to the central bracing strut on the floats.

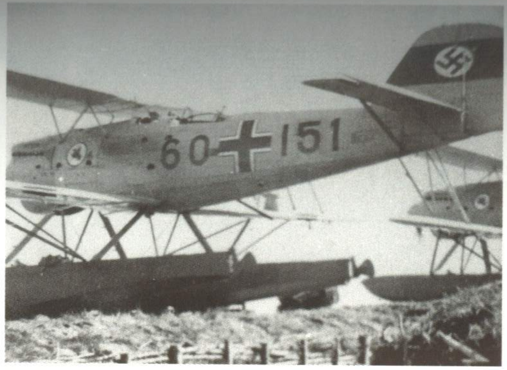




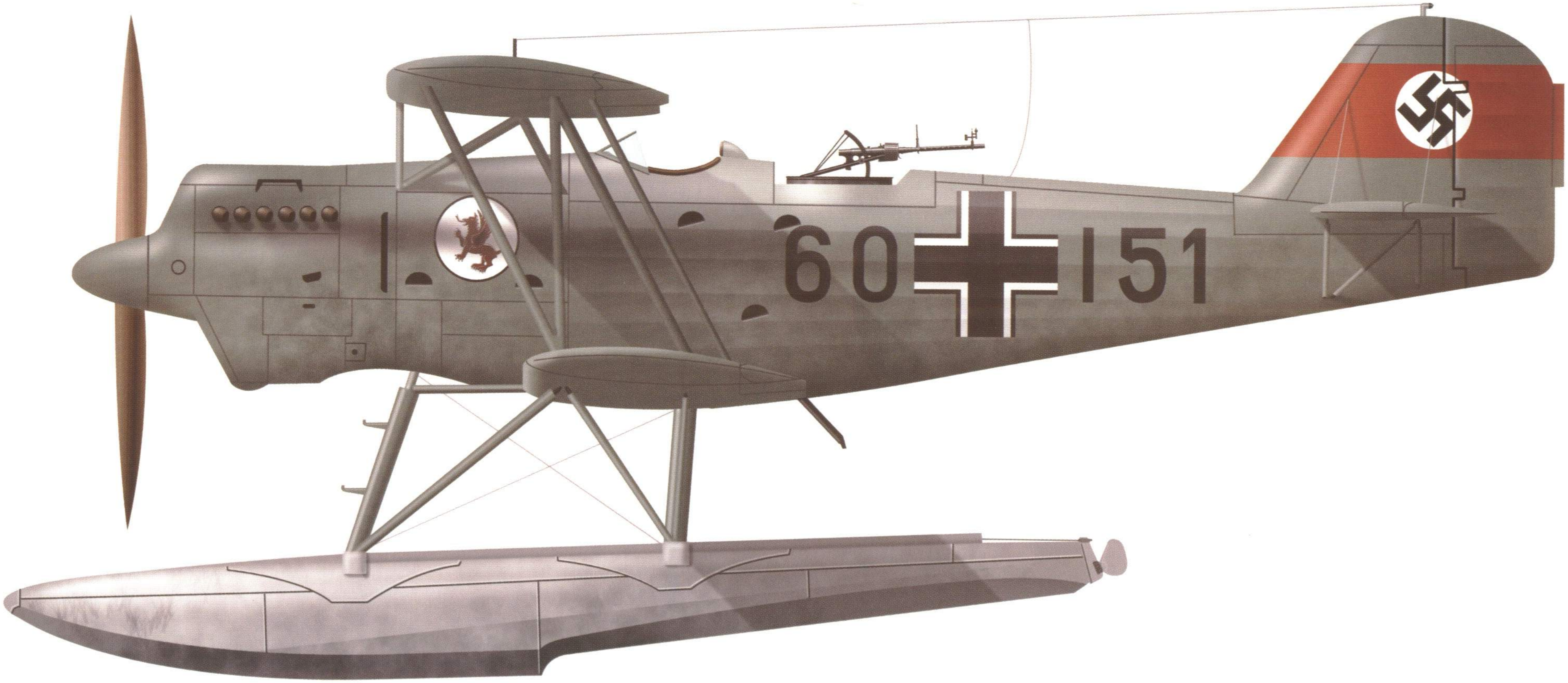
ABOVE: Designed as the successor to the He 60 this appears to be a newly delivered Heinkel He 114 A-2 to 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 506 coded 60+U51. It carries th unit's Griffon emblem.



Emblem of
1./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506



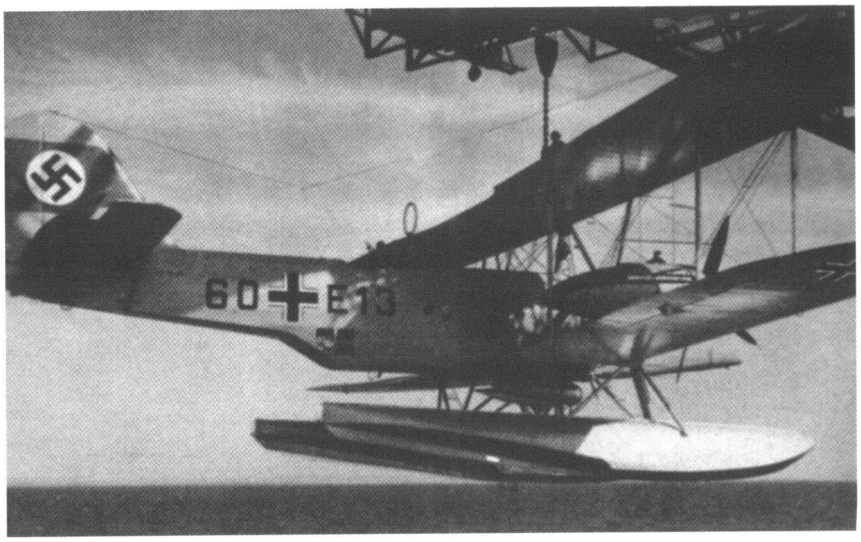
LEFT: Two He 60 Cs of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 506 stand on a beach somewhere on the Baltic Coast in the pre-war period. The nearest aircraft carries the unit code 60+I51 and has the 'Griffon' unit emblem painted on a white circle outlined in black.

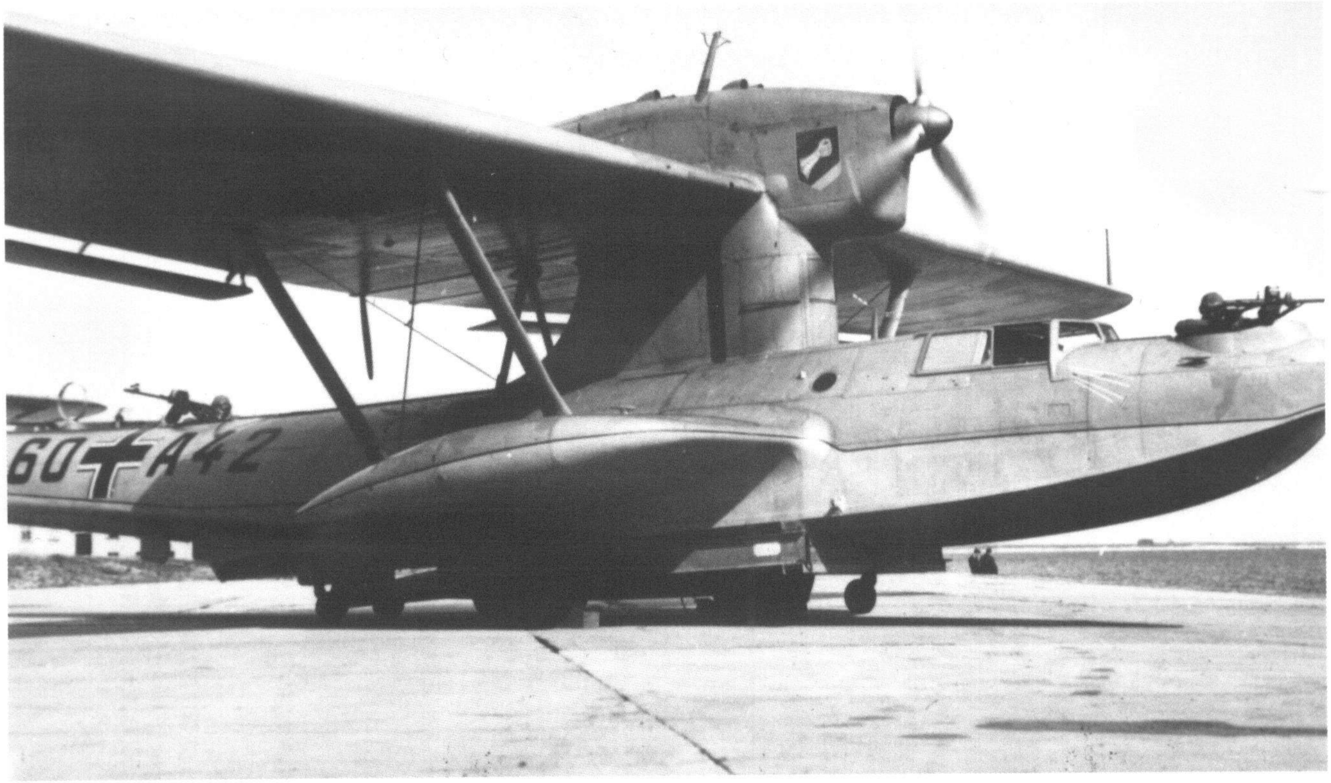


Heinkel He 60 C of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 506

This aircraft carries the pre-war unit code of 60+I51 and is painted in RLM Grey 02 all over except for the floats, which were normally painted in RLM 01 silver. The fin and rudder marking of the Hakenkreuz shows the typical pre-war style of a red horizontal band with a white disc in the centre with a black Swastika inside it. The unit badge of a demi-rampant 'Griffon' on a white circle outlined in black is painted on the nose.

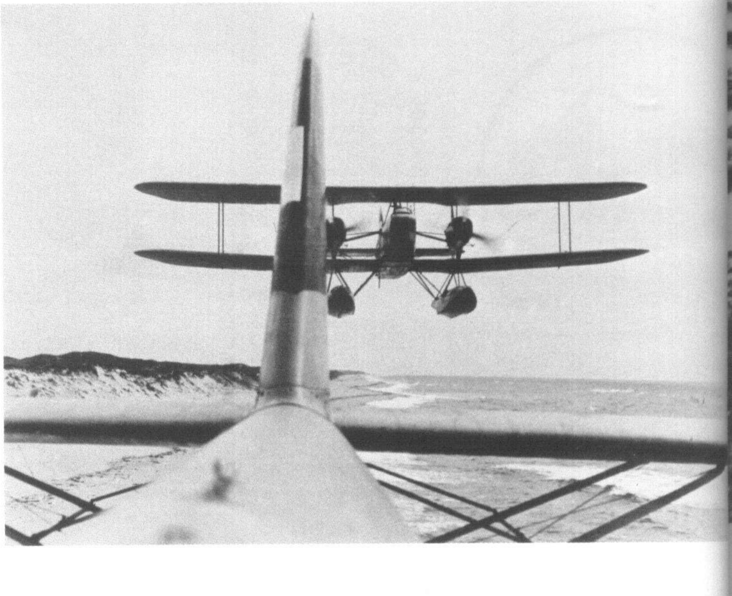
RIGHT: A Heinkel He 59 B-2 coded 60+E13 of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 106 is hoisted from the water by a mobile crane. Such cranes were designed to swing the aircraft around onto the landing stage for attachment to its beaching trolley.

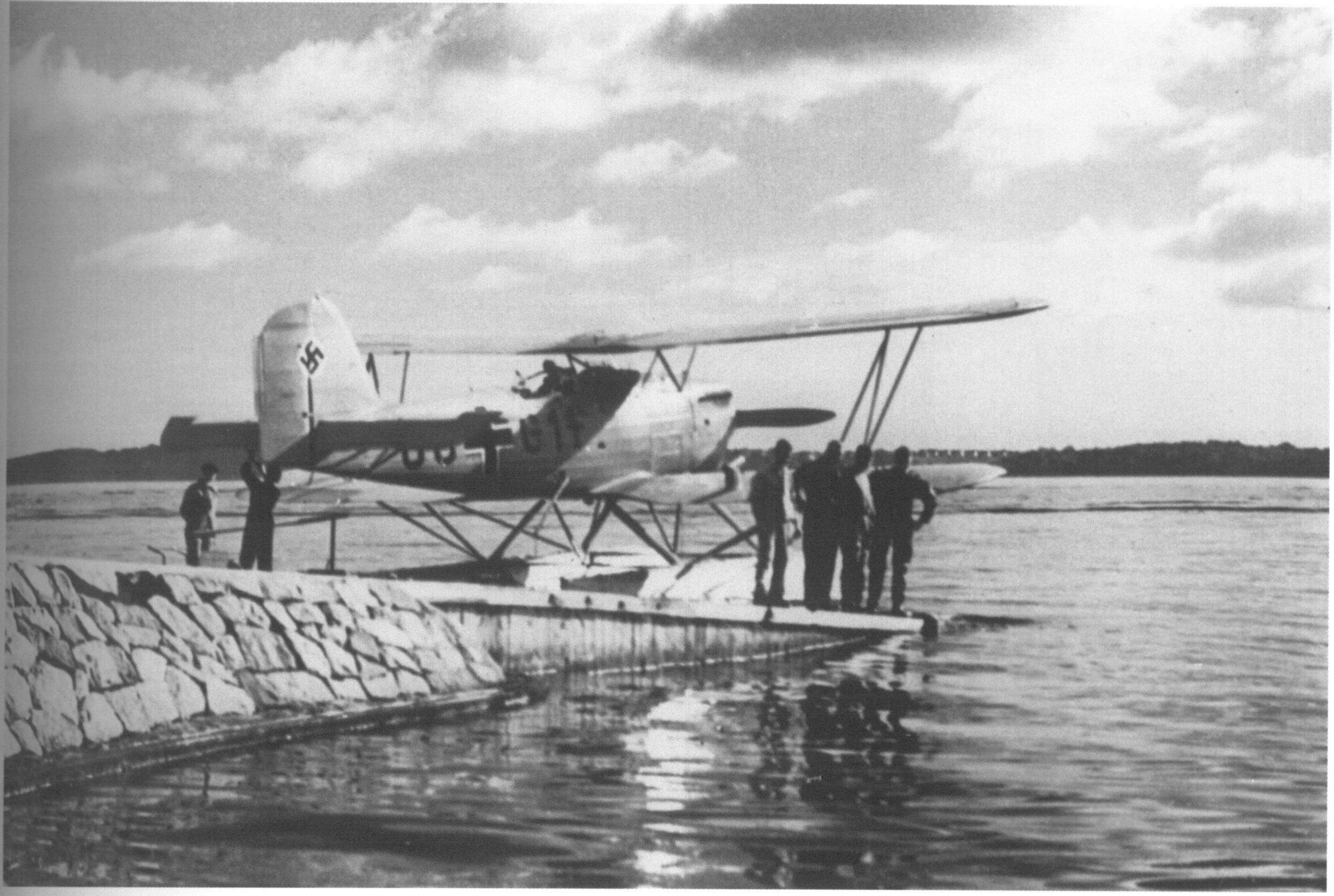


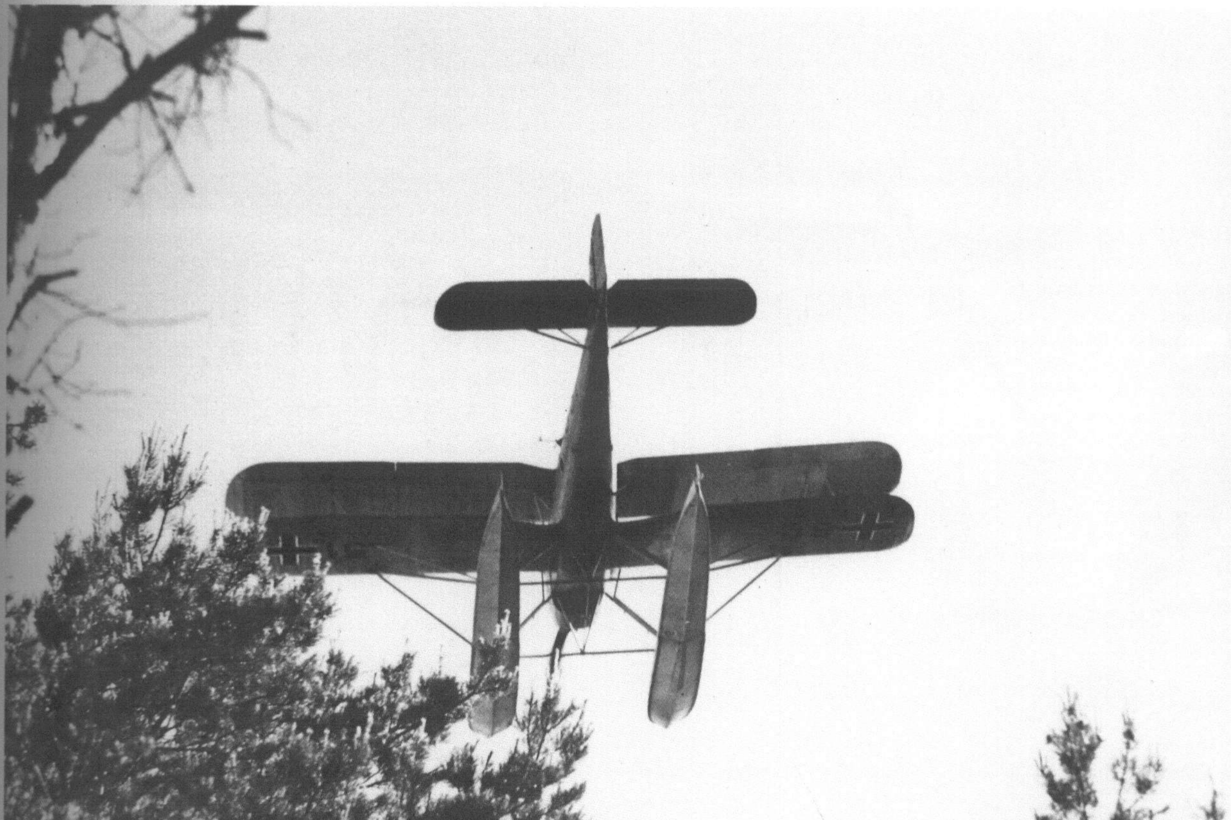


LEFT: A Dorni Do 18 D coded 60+A42 of 2./Kü.Fl.Gr 406 on its beaching trolley with its forward (tande fitted) Junkers Jumo 205D eng at idle. Note the staffel emblem the cowling of armoured glove a brown background, wi blue segment a the top and a yellow one bel The aircraft appears to be i overall two-ton finish with the lighter colour clearly defined the longitudal l along the lowe hull and spons

RIGHT: A photograph taken before the war from the centre gun position of a He 59 B during a training flight low over the coast, with another such machine behind. The view shows the problem the rear gunner would have had with the fin obstructing the field of fire if an enemy aircraft were to attack from the rear. Note also the pre-war fin and rudder markings with the starboard side marked with horizontal stripes in black, white and red running from the top representative of the old colours of Prussia. On the port side the colour is a single red band, the same overall height as the starboard side, which would also have a white circle containing a black Hakenkreuz, representing the Reichs-und Nationalflagge of the National Socialist Party.

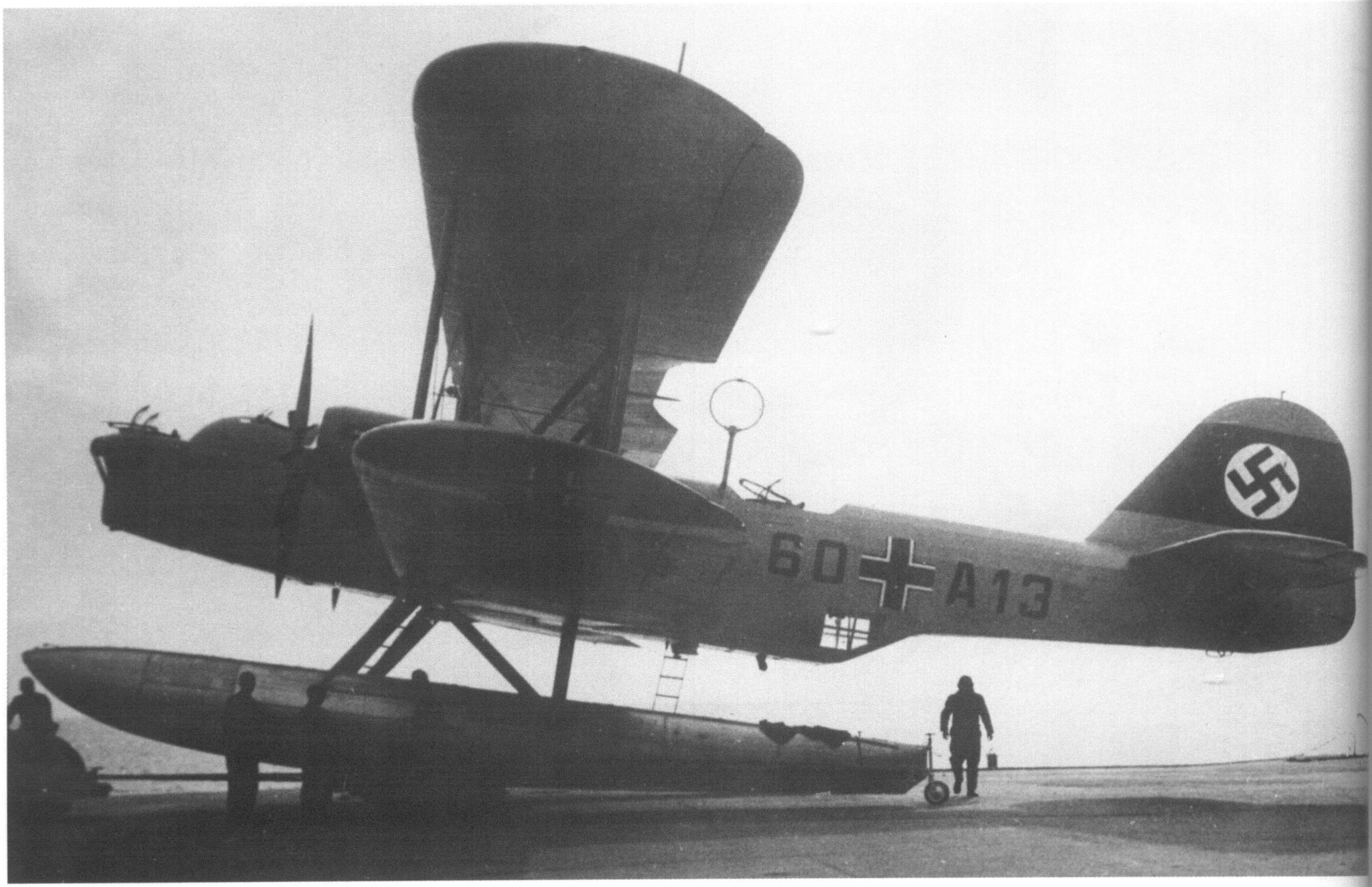




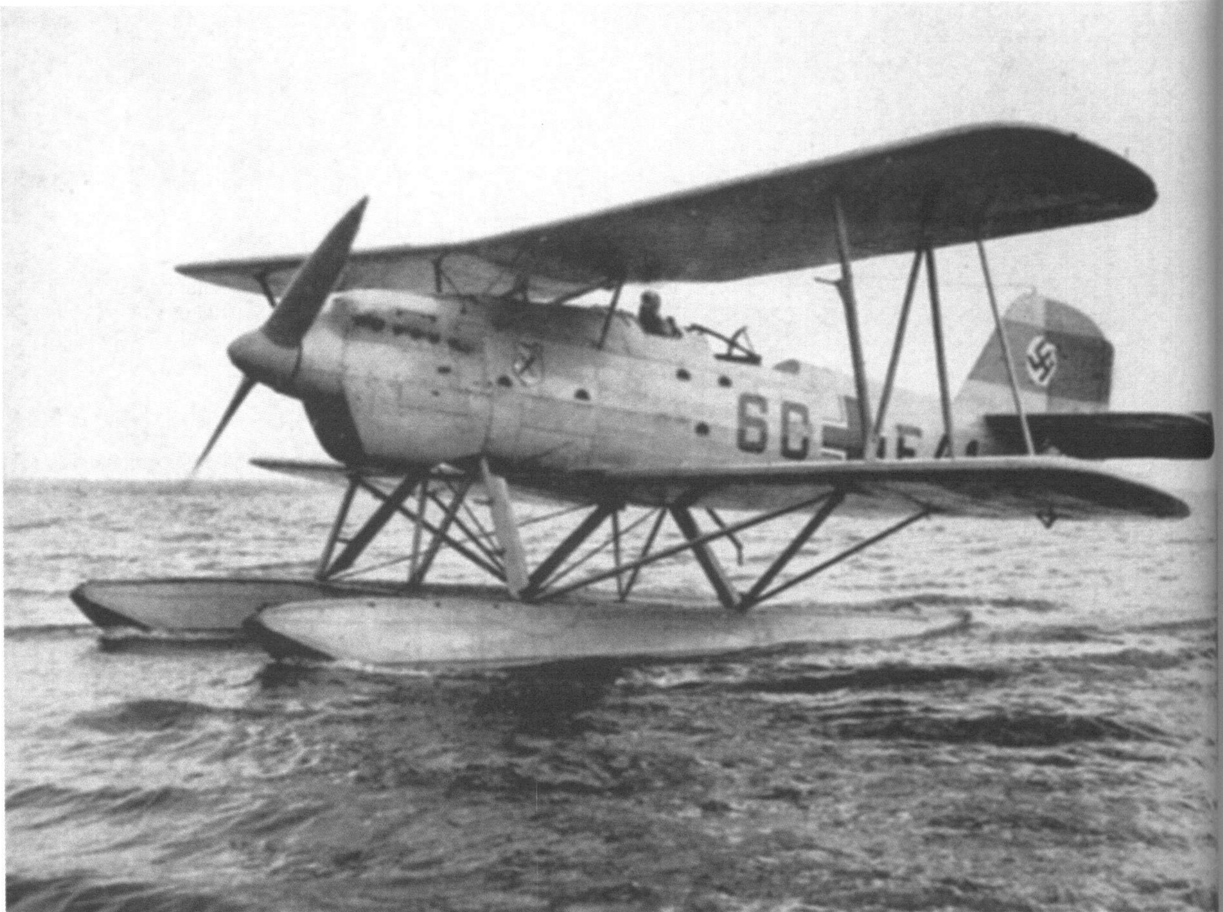


ABOVE: A Heinkel He 60 C-1 of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 106 at the water's edge receives final checks prior to flight.

LEFT: A Heinkel He 60 C-1 possibly of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 506 flies in to alight at a Baltic base, likely to be Dievenow, circa 1938.

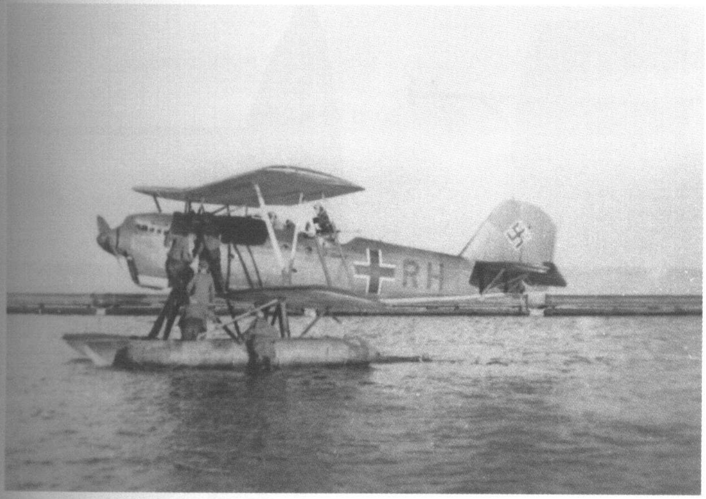


ABOVE: A Heinkel He 59 B-2 coded 60+A13 of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 106 sits on its beaching trolley at List in 1936. The unit code of '60' was changed in May 1939 to 'M2'. Note the distinctive large radio loop common to the type and the fact that the armament has been removed.

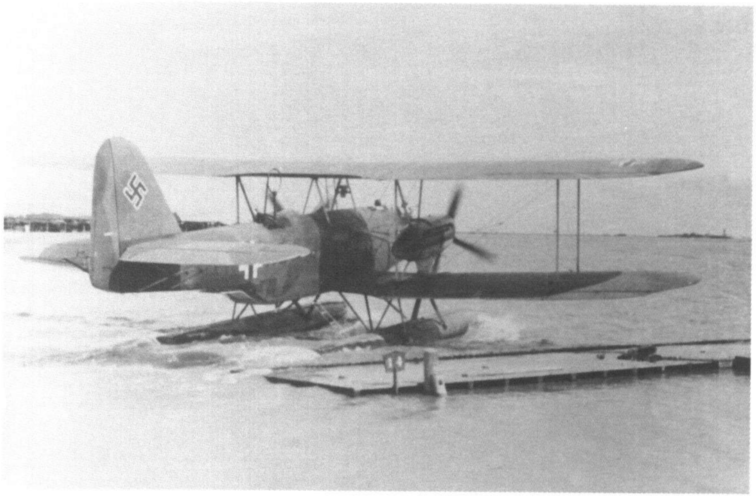


RIGHT: With his BMW V16,0ZU 12-cylinder engine stopped, the pilot of this Heinkel He 60 C, possibly of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 406, coasts into the landing stage.

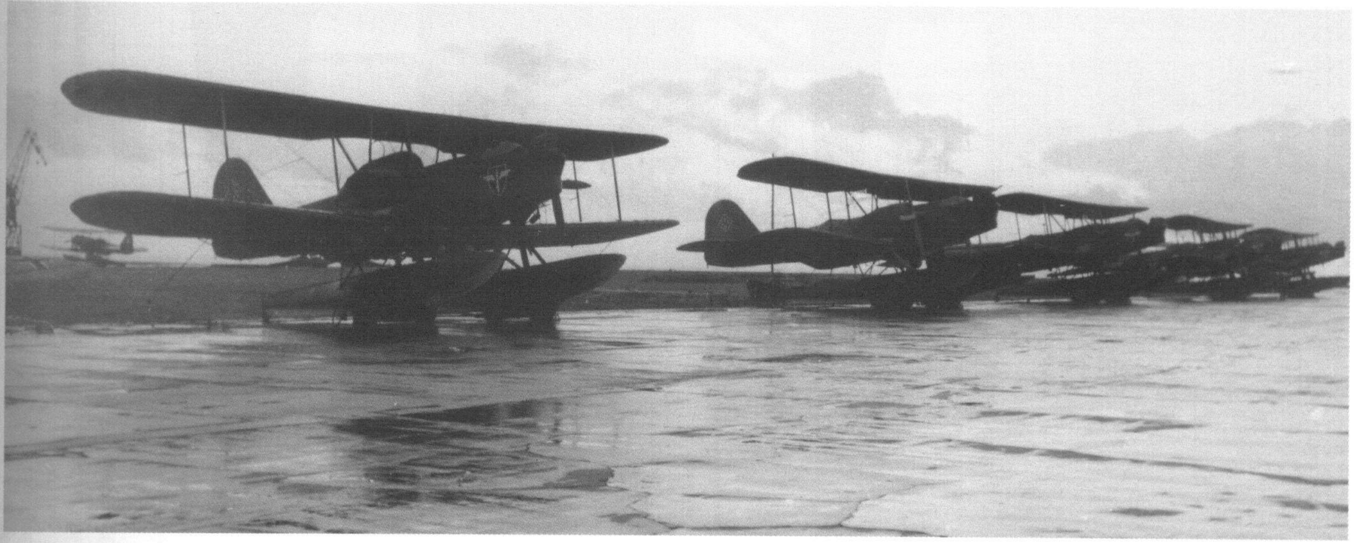
scanned by alfetta



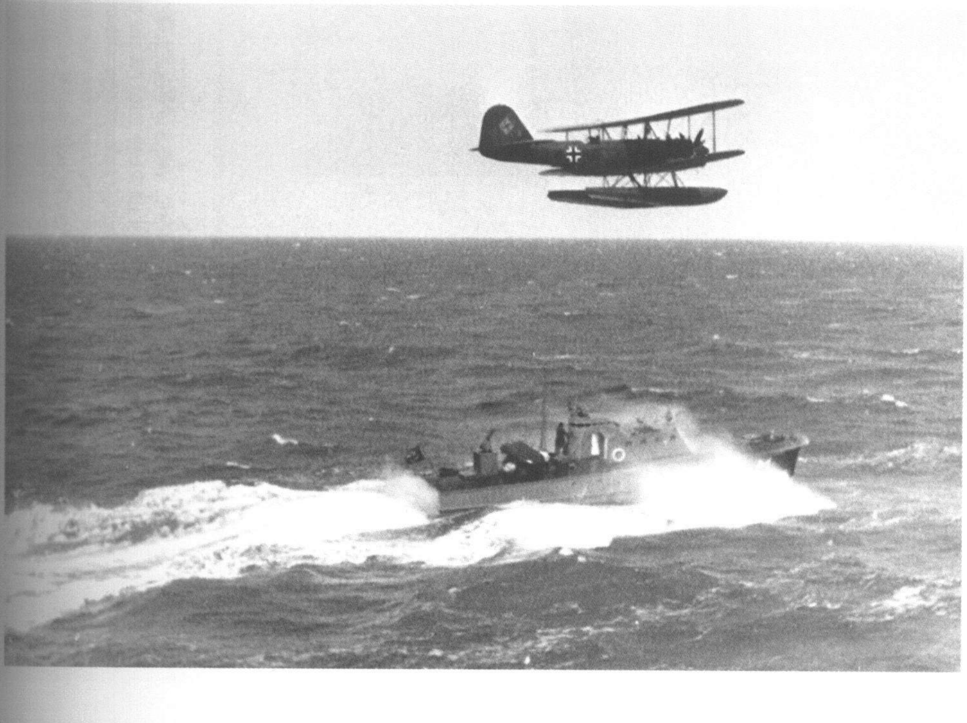
ABOVE: This He 60 coded possibly N7+RH of Seenotstaffel 2, has just landed and is being boarded by mechanics who have made their way to the aircraft in a rubber dinghy. The fuselage Balkenkreuz is of the early war type, having narrow white angles with a thin black outline. The aircraft is painted in a RLM 71/72 splinter pattern with 65 beneath.



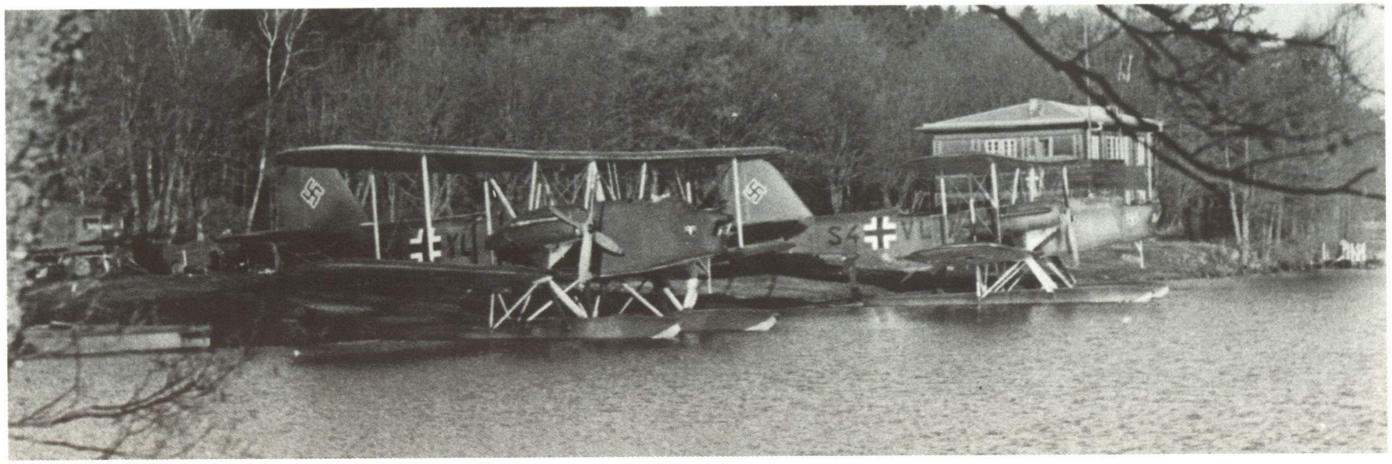
ABOVE: The pilot of this He 59 B of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 506 revs up his engines after casting off from the mooring dock before making his take-off run.



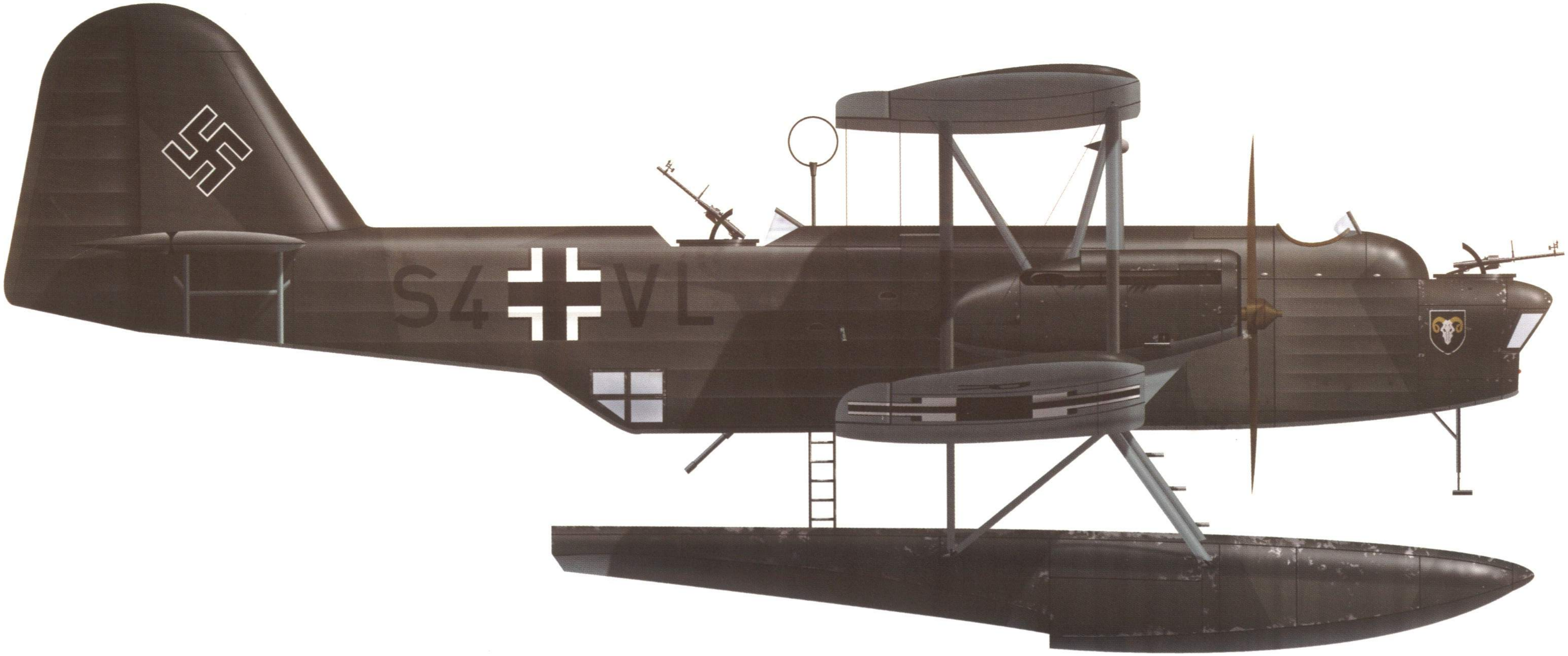
ABOVE: Taken on 26 October 1939 at Wilhelmshaven, these five canvas-covered Heinkel He 59 Bs from 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 406 stand ready on their beaching trolleys waiting for a break in the inclement weather. Another aircraft can be seen in the distance beneath the crane. All the aircraft in the foreground carry the white winged sword on a black shield emblem of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 406. This emblem was adopted by 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 506 shortly after this photograph was taken.



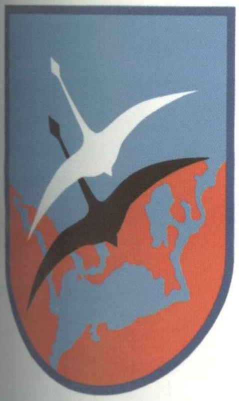
LEFT: A He 59 D flies low over a German high-speed launch in choppy seas. The Heinkel carries standard wartime national markings although the unit is not known.



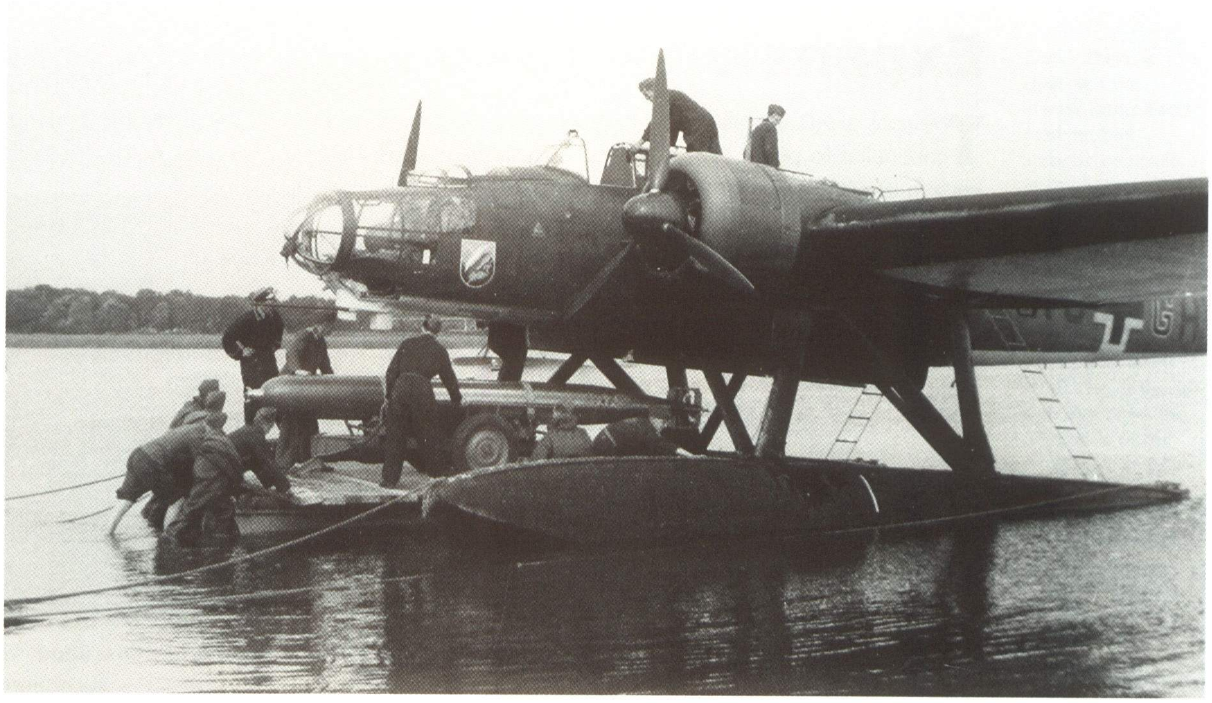
RIGHT: Two He 59 B-2 coded S4+VL and S4+YL respectively, of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 506 stand ready for action in December 1939. The original wartime caption to this photograph reads, 'Stationed in a black location, a small discreet bay somewhere along the coast is our operations base'. The term 'black' denotes a secret operational location probably the Baltic coast.



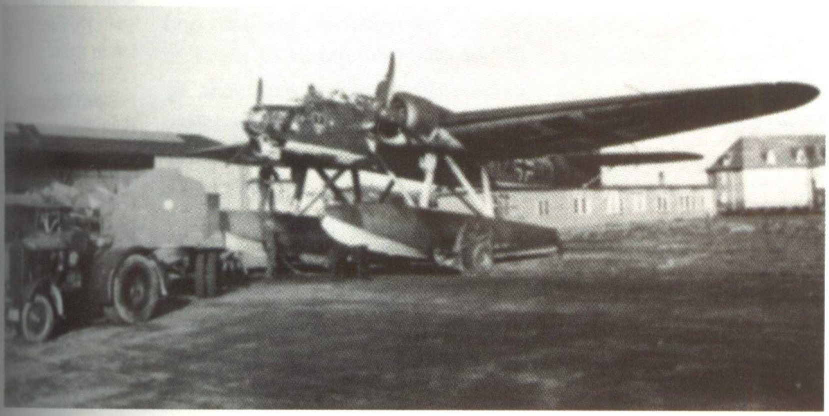
Heinkel He 59 B-2, S4+VL, of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 506, late 1939
Painted in a splinter pattern of RLM 72/73 on the upper surfaces with RLM 65 pale blue underneath extending to its floats, this He 59 carries the standard early war camouflage scheme. The unit code, S4+VL, was painted in black on the fuselage sides with the individual aircraft letter 'V' also in black rather than the normal Staffel colour of yellow. The fuselage Balkenkreuz is also unusual for the 1939 period since the white outline is not itself outlined with a thin black line. The unit badge of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 506 is painted on the nose and the timber propellers appear to have been left in a clear varnish finish.



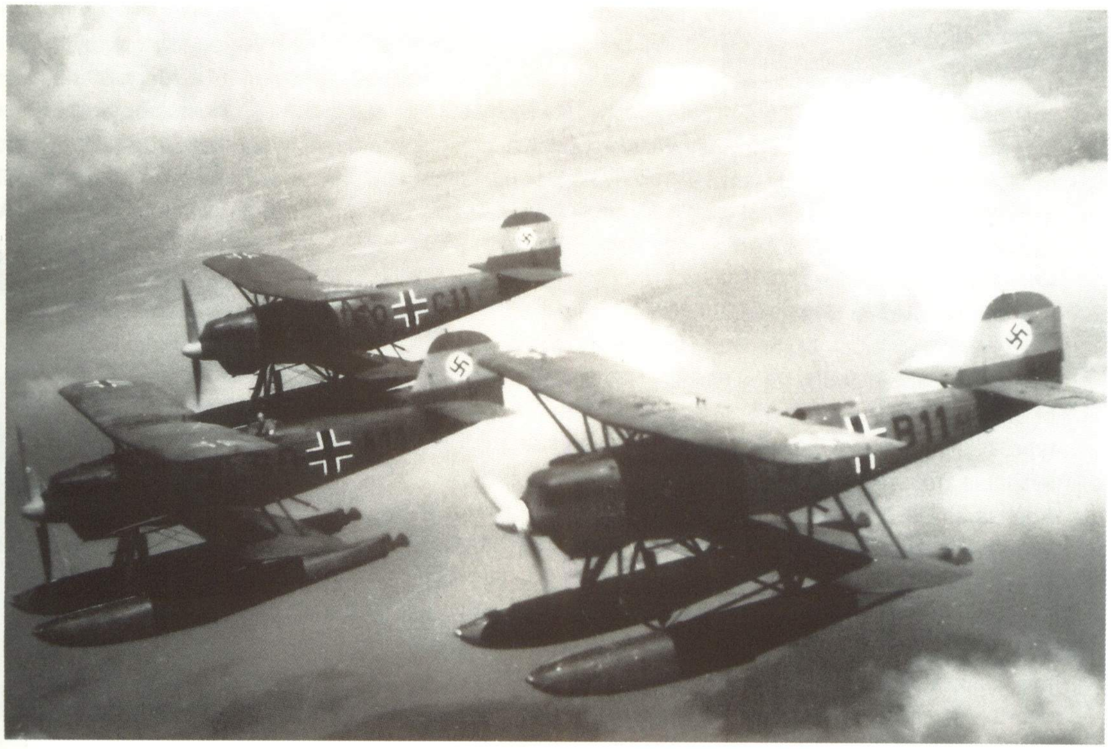
Staffel emblem of 1./Kü.Fl.406



ABOVE: Seen standing in shallow water at one of the German bases along the Baltic coast, this He 115 C-1, K6+GH, is probably an aircraft of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 406 and is being loaded with a torpedo from a raft pushed under the fuselage. Note the Staffel emblem painted on the nose. The unit was originally 2./Kü.Fl.Gr 506 but was re-designated in October 1939. In August of that year the unit was based at Hörnum on the North Sea coast.



LEFT: This Heinkel He 115 C-1 coded M2+GH of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 106 is receiving a service on its beaching trolley. Note the large under wing crosses and lack of wear on the floats which suggests recent repainting.



RIGHT: Three Heinkel He 60s of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 106 fly in tight formation. All carry the early standard maritime splinter pattern 72/73 splinter pattern with 65 beneath, black fuselage codes and early war type narrow Balkenkreuz. Though they still carry the immediate pre-war markings of the swastika within a white circle on a red band. The tips to the floats are red with the spinner tips in the Staffel colours.

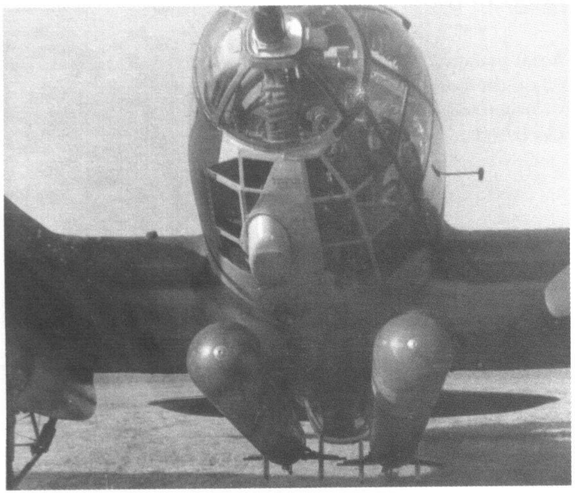
Expansion – 1940

The year 1940 started off very much as 1939 had finished with the *Luftwaffe's* maritime aircraft continuing to probe British defences for apparent weaknesses. The first *Luftwaffe* loss came very early in the New Year when at about 1100 hours on 1 January 1940, a formation of six Junkers 88s of I./KG 30 attacked shipping off Scapa Flow. They were intercepted by Gloster Gladiator biplanes of the Sullom Voe Fighter Flight and two Lockheed Hudsons of 220 Squadron. Despite its superior speed, the Junkers 88 flown by *Fw* Harry von Görne of 3./KG 30 was shot down by either Fg Off 'Jock' Gillen and Plt Off Richard Winter of the Fighter Flight or Fg Off Gareth Carey of 220 Squadron; curiously, the two Hudsons reported intercepting and shooting down a Heinkel 111 which itself shot down the Hudson flown by Flt Lt Trevor Clarke; there were no other German losses other than *Fw* von Görne's aircraft.

ABOVE: Three officers of I./KG point to a map o Scapa Flow in Ma 1940.They are fro left to right: Oberleutnant Philips, Oberleutn Hans Werner Magnussen (3./KG 30) and Major Fritz Doens Gruppen Kommandeur.

The start of 1940 saw elements of III./KG 26 receiving Heinkel 111 H-4s fitted with torpedo releasing equipment but as there was still indecision as to whether the *Kriegsmarine* or *Luftwaffe* were responsible for torpedo attacks so KG 26, together with KG 30, bided its time by attacking shipping or carrying out armed reconnaissance to the north of Scotland and the Naval facilities thereabouts.

Contact with the RAF was occasional and losses infrequent. By means of example, for the period 30 January to 9 February 1940, German losses totalled seven aircraft. On 30 January, a Heinkel 111 from 4./KG 26 flown by *Fw* Helmut Höfer was shot down by Hurricanes of 43 Squadron flown by Flt Lt Caesar Hull and Sgt Frank Carey but the remaining aircraft of II./KG 26 succeeded in sinking three freighters totalling just over 7,800 tons and a tanker of 7,200 tons. On 3 February, 43 Squadron was successful again, shooting down aircraft from 2. and 3./KG 26, flown by *Uffz* Walter Remischke and *Ofw* Fritz Wiemer respectively and one from 4/KG 26 flown by *Uffz* Hermann Wilms. On the same day, the *Staffel Kapitän* of 1./KG 30, *Hptm* Heinz Rosenthal, was also shot down by the ship it was attacking; however only two ships were sunk this day – a 629 ton freighter by II./KG 26 and a minesweeper by 2./KG 30. Finally on 9 February, 602 Squadron shot down another 5./KG 26 bomber flown by *Uffz* Helmut Meyer whilst 2./KG 30 lost another aircraft over the North Sea when *Fw* Friedrich Pfeiffer and his crew all perished, shot down by *Flak*. Just two minesweepers were sunk this day, both by KG 30. In human terms, the *Luftwaffe* suffered 15 aircrew killed or missing and 14 prisoners of war. The only RAF combat loss over the North Sea in the same period was just one Hurricane of 43 Squadron on 9 February whose pilot was rescued.



ABOVE: A Heinkel He 111 H-6 or H-16 loaded with two aerial torpedos. Close inspection of the photograph shows flight crew aboard the aircraft. The weapon in the A-Stand position in the nose is a MG-FF 20 mm cannon used for flak suppression and strafing.The canvas shell ejection chute is visible beneath the weapon.

The occasional torpedo operation still took place, the first attack of the year is believed to have been carried out by three Heinkel He 115s of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506 on 12 March 1940 by which time 135 technically improved torpedoes were available to front line units. However, the *Kriegsmarine* still continued to be influential, apparently asking for the suitability of the Heinkel He 111 and Junkers Ju 88 for dropping torpedoes to be investigated. Testing of the Ju 88 as a torpedo aircraft was not pursued at this time, as it was a '*Führer* only decision' to use this aircraft this way. However, the He 111

BELOW: The starboard side of a He 115, thought to be 2503, coded K6+KH of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 40 photographed base in Norwa

LEFT: Damage to a float was not always immediately evident, but sometimes resulted in dramatic scenes such as this, where a He 115 has probably hit an obstruction upon the water on landing off the Norwegian coast in 1940. The radio call sign letters on the underside of the wing have clearly been painted out and the individual aircraft latter 'F' has been painted in black outside the wing Balkenkreuz.

could be tested, which resulted in the He 111 being declared operational, though this would not occur until the end of 1940. In the meantime, the He 115, production of which would cease at the end of 1940, continued to soldier on.

Also in February 1940, *General* Paul Coeler's 9. *Fliegerdivision* would prove to be an uneasy birth with initial allocations of units, specifically KG 1 and KG 4 being diverted to other tasks. However, KGr 126, commanded by *Hptm* Gerd Stein, was formed from III./KG 26 and given specific responsibilities for *Luftminen,* its first mission against England believed to have taken place on 17 April 1940 when eight of its He 111s together with ten Heinkel 115s of 5./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506 laid mines in the Thames Estuary.

Sporadic (but irritating from a British viewpoint) conventional attacks against shipping continued at the same pace for the following two months. One of the last losses off the British coast before the tempo of war changed occurred on 3 April 1940 and resulted in the ditching of both attacker and defender as the German pilot, *Oblt* Rudolf Behnisch of *Stab* II./KG 26 recalled:

> *"Our task was harassment of British east coast shipping but we called it an armed reconnaissance and it was timed in such a way that several planes showed up at the same time at different locations along the British coast; flying over mainland Britain at that time was strictly forbidden.*
>
> *"When the Spitfire met us, we were already in trouble. The port engine had to be stopped by me after being hit when attacking a ship much bigger than the trawler that rescued us after ditching. Our electrical system had failed and I could not adjust the propellers from two to single-engined flying. As a result, I was flying close to stalling speed and could not climb into the clouds. There was another handicap – a hole in the port wing which was so wide it was causing air resistance so high that I could not keep a straight course and the aircraft drifted to the left in spite of trimming – something I hoped to overcome by getting a crew member to pump the fuel by hand from the port wing to the starboard tanks.*
>
> *"All of this was useless when the* Bordfunker *called out: 'British fighter plane approaching from the port behind!' The Spitfire then circled our crippled plane and when it passed ahead of us,* Obstlt *Hefele* [Gruppen Kommandeur of II./KG *26*]*, lying on the mat behind the nose gun, fired away and I realised that the bullets had hit the Spitfire fairly and squarely. He then attacked from behind and his burst hit the starboard wing and engine, sealing our fate. With only the noise from the wind, I shouted 'Get free of your parachutes and fasten your belt!' I hand pumped the flaps down and managed a pronounced tail-first landing in the heavy sea, causing a wall of water. All five of us got out,* Lt *Georg Kempe, the* Beobachter*, having been wounded in the head. The Spitfire circled us once more and passing close to us, I saw the pilot waving his hand. Our* Bordmechaniker *then remarked: 'He is losing fluid' and we saw a white trail becoming darker, even flames.*
>
> *"In the meantime, we tried to get the dinghy afloat but it had been punctured by bullets and sank immediately. We all then went into the water and we watched the Heinkel sink gradually. I then realised that my lifejacket was not holding air so I climbed back onto the tail which was still above the water. From my observation point, I was the first to see a drifter coming towards us. We swam towards the approaching ship, the crew lowered some ropes and with the help of two fishermen, we managed, rather exhausted, to board the ship where we were laid down and invited to take a sip from a bottle of whiskey whilst one man covered us with a shotgun..."*

The Germans were correct in seeing flames coming from the Spitfire – shortly afterwards, the victorious pilot, Fg Off Norman Ryder of 41 Squadron, saw his engine oil temperature rising followed by oil fumes in the cockpit. Too low to bale out, he too was forced to ditch in the North Sea only in his case, his Spitfire almost took him to the seabed.

It was clear that German intentions were about to change at the start of April 1940 and it was then that the first of many Junkers 88 versus Short Sunderland flying boat combats occurred, teaching the *Luftwaffe* an early lesson as to the potency of the 'Flying Porcupine' as the Sunderland became known. Just before midday on 3 April 1940, a Sunderland of 204 Squadron, captained by Flt Lt Frank Phillips, lifted off from Sullom Voe to carry out a convoy escort off the Norwegian coast. After arriving on station as planned, the flight was uneventful until 1550 hours when two unidentified aircraft were spotted:

> *"..two enemy aircraft were sighted on the water approaching our aircraft from the direction of the Norwegian coast. Both our aircraft and the enemy were 50 to 100 feet above the sea. The enemy circled around our aircraft for two minutes and then carried out a beam attack on the starboard side at a range of 800 yards, the two aircraft flying past successively on a course parallel to our own. A desultory engagement took place, without any apparent damage to either aircraft. Both turrets and the starboard amidships gunner fired short bursts. The subsequent appearance of four more Junkers 88s led to the belief that the enemy was exploring this tactic to draw our fire..."*

The Sunderland had been intercepted by aircraft from *Hptm* Claus Hinkelbein's II./KG 30. Since its formation in December 1939, this unit had lost only two aircraft in action, the latest being when *Oblt* Rudolf Quadt, *Staffel Kapitän* of 6. *Staffel* was shot down by *Flak* attacking shipping off the Northumberland coast on the evening of 29 March 1940; 3 April 1940 would prove to be a black day for II./KG 30 and a valuable lesson for both the RAF and *Luftwaffe* as the official RAF report continues:

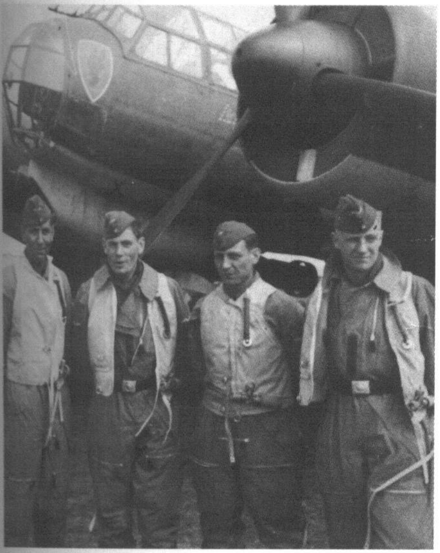
> *"After three minutes of fighting, the two aircraft began to climb, turning away from our aircraft and after a three minute pause, four more aircraft appeared from the same direction as the first two and immediately delivered a line astern attack on our tail. The rear gunner held his fire until the leading aircraft was at 100 yards range. He then opened fire and shot down the leading attacker which banked steeply and dived into the sea. The second aircraft was also hit and was afterwards known to have force landed..."*

The aircraft seen to crash was flown by the experienced *Staffel Kapitän* of 5./KG 30, *Oblt* Karl Overweg; he and his crew were killed instantly. The second aircraft, flown by *Uffz* Willi Erkens, was badly damaged and forced-landed at Stavanger in Norway where its crew was interned. However, the combat did not finish there:

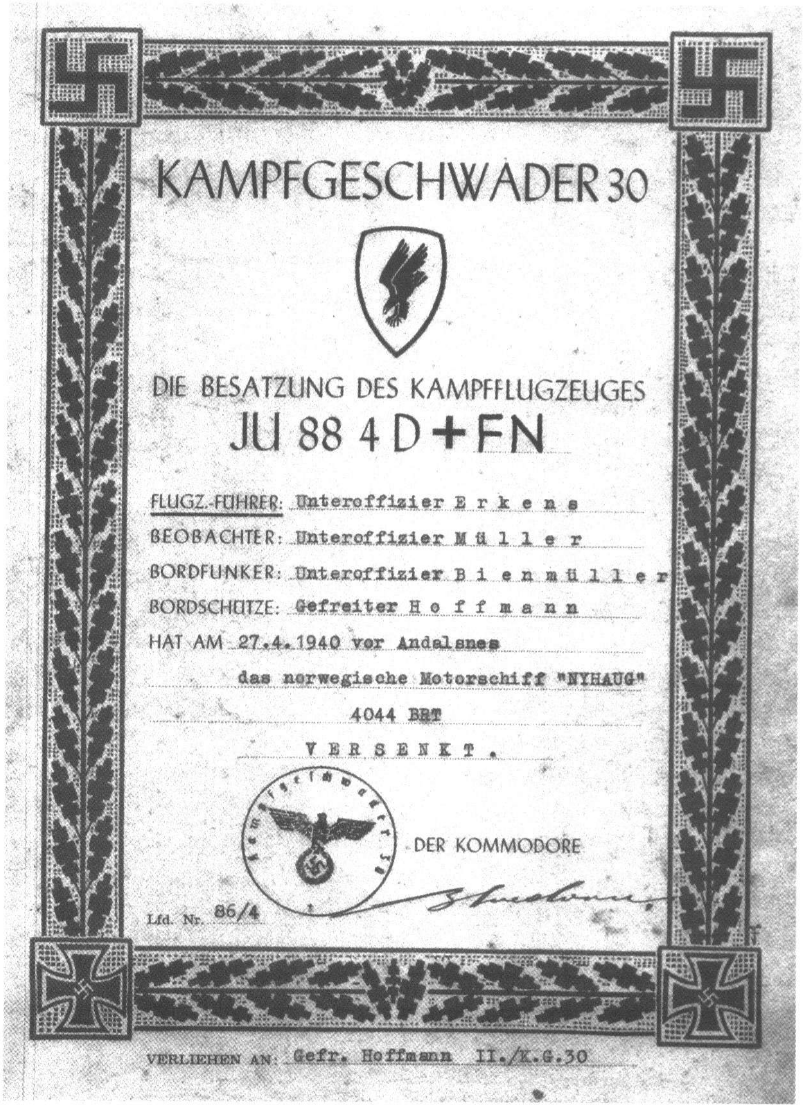
> *"During the attack, the first two aircraft to arrive attempted to bomb the Sunderland from 1,500 feet. The bombs however were easily avoided by the fire control officer in the observation dome, directing the pilot away from them.*
>
> *"As soon as the attack of the four aircraft had been broken up by our gunfire, the five remaining aircraft immediately made off and our aircraft made for home having suffered the following damage: bullets in port inner, starboard middle and starboard inner fuel tanks causing loss of 500 gallons during return flight; bullet holes in hull, fin, instrument panel; trimming gear and fuel jettison systems made unserviceable; one bomb rack damaged and the fire control officer and navigator both suffering from cuts from splinters."*

Although it cannot be proven for certain, a third Ju 88, flown by *Lt* Fritz Koch of 4./KG 30 crashed north east of Bremerhaven resulting in the deaths of all four crew members and it is possible this aircraft was also damaged in this combat. Flt Lt Frank Phillips was awarded the DFC for this action and his rear gunner, LAC William Lillie, the DFM; sadly, both were killed when their Sunderland was shot down off the Norwegian coast on 21 July 1940 by *Oblt* Lorenz Weber, *Staffel Kapitän* of 8./JG 77, the German pilot also being shot down and killed in the same action.

The German invasion of Scandinavia on 9 April 1940, Operation *Weserübung*, gave an added impetus to German maritime operations, with a reinforced X. *Fliegerkorps* being tasked to carry out the



ABOVE AND RIGHT: Unteroffizier Willi Erkens of 5./KG 30 stands with his crew, Unteroffizier Muller, Unteroffizier Bienmüller and Gefreiter Hoffmann in front of their Ju 88 A, 4D+FN in April 1940. Flying this aircraft, the crew sunk the Norwegian motor ship 'Nyhaug' of 4,044 tonnes on 27 April 1940 off Andalsnes in Norway (*RIGHT*), damaged an English heavy cruiser of 10,000 tonnes on 20 May 1940 and further damaged an English cruiser of 7,000 tonnes on 23 May 1940. Note the emblem of II./KG 30 on the nose of the aircraft which consisted of a diving black eagle within a red shield outlined in yellow or white. The crew wear standard one-piece light tan K So/34 flight suits tucked into Flieger-Pelzstiefel (flyer's fur-lined boots) with SWp 734 Schwimmweste (life jackets). All wear the simple grey-blue Fliegermütze (flyer's cap) woollen sidecap. On the 3 April 1940 Willi Erkens with his crew Unteroffizier Walter Grahn, Feldwebel Andreas Linden and Gefreiter Willi Hoffmann were interned in Norway following combat with a Short Sunderland of 204 Squadron.



KAMPFGESCHWADER 30

DIE BESATZUNG DES KAMPFFLUGZEUGES
JU 88 4 D+FN

FLUGZ.-FÜHRER: Unteroffizier Erkens
BEOBACHTER: Unteroffizier Müller
BORDFUNKER: Unteroffizier Bienmüller
BORDSCHÜTZE: Gefreiter Hoffmann
HAT AM 27.4.1940 vor Andalsnes
das norwegische Motorschiff "NYHAUG"
4044 BRT
VERSENKT.

DER KOMMODORE

Lfd. Nr. 86/4

VERLIEHEN AN: Gefr. Hoffmann II./K.G.30

offensive air operations. Both KG 26 and KG 30, the latter unit now up to full strength with all three *Gruppen*, initially operated from bases in northern Germany but when many of the Norwegian airfields were overrun, this allowed elements to deploy forward. So quick was the German advance that by 10 April 1940, 1. and 7./KG 26 were able to operate from Stavanger-Sola with elements of KG 30 soon being able to operate from Stavanger, Oslo-Fornebu and Trondheim-Vaernes.

The *Luftwaffe's* bombers had quickly locked horns with the Royal Navy with KG 26 initially flying in the region of 41 sorties and KG 30 26 sorties against British warships. The first major air-sea engagement of the war occurred in the afternoon of 9 April 1940 when KG 30 sunk the destroyer HMS *Gurkha* and damaged the cruisers HMS *Southampton* and *Galatea* – one of the pilots responsible for damaging one of the cruisers was *Hptm* Arved Crüger, *Staffel Kapitän* of 3./KG 30 who claimed a hit with a 1,000 kg bomb; it is believed that this success, and the fact that that Crüger had flown 24 operational flights, was instrumental in him being awarded the *Ritterkreuz* on 10 June 1940. A second wave of bombers, this time consisting of I. and II./KG 26, succeeding in damaging the heavy cruiser HMS *Devonshire* and the light cruisers HMS *Sheffield* and *Glasgow*. However, the heavily armed warships were able to put up formidable anti-aircraft fire, shooting down four Junkers 88s, one of which was flown by the *Gruppen Kommandeur* of III./KG 30, *Hptm* Siegfried Mahrenholtz.

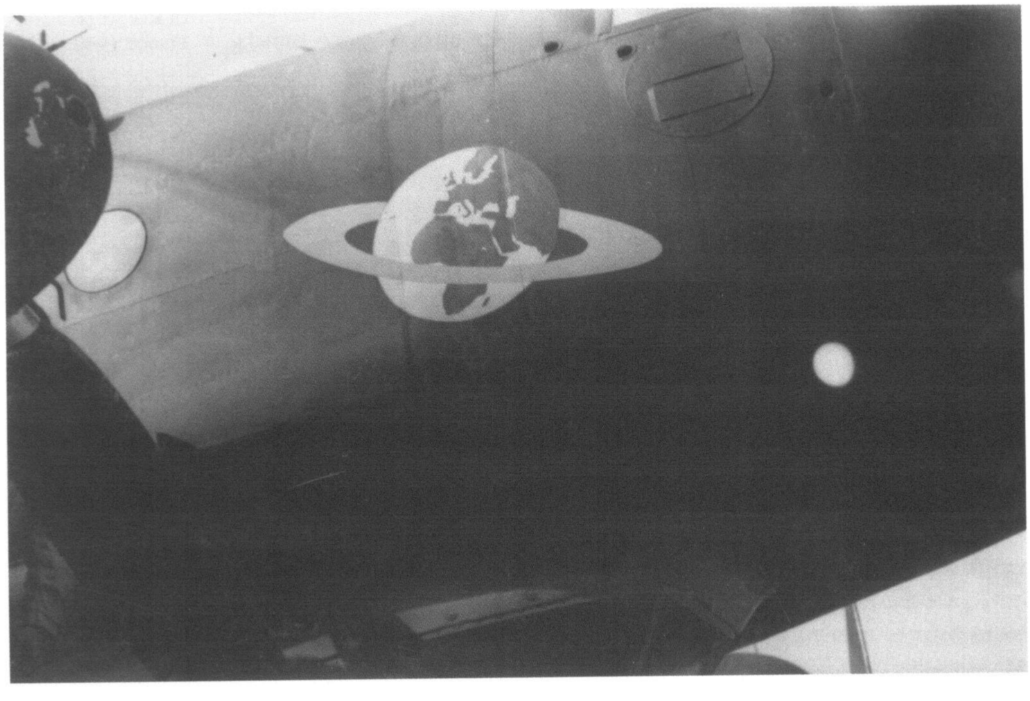
BELOW: Ground crew prepare to load a SC250 bomb from a purpose-built hydraulic trolley into a Ju 88 of KG 30, probably France 1940.

Meanwhile, closer to the United Kingdom, the *Luftwaffe* still continued taking the fight to its enemy. Two Heinkel He 111s of II./KG 26 had already been lost on the evening of 8 April whilst attacking shipping off Scapa Flow, further victims of Hurricanes of 43 Squadron and then on 10 April 1940, a series of attacks were carried out around the Orkney and Shetland Islands. The initial attack was carried out against the British Home Fleet off the Shetland Islands by *KGr* 100, a specialist bombing unit which had lately been subordinated to X *Fliegerkorps* and which had been employed on limited anti-shipping operations. KGr 100 was leading in a Heinkel 111 of 3.(F)/OBdL commanded by *Oblt* Karl Heinz whose task was to call in Heinkel 111s of KG 26. *Hptm* Artur von Casimir, the *Gruppen Kommandeur of* KGr 100, noted in his logbook that during an *'armed reconnaissance of the Orkneys*', they were intercepted by enemy fighters. What he did not see was that the fighters, from 43 Squadron, then shot down the reconnaissance Heinkel He 111 with the loss of the whole crew. Some hours later, KG 26 and KG 30 attacked at dusk, KG 26 lost three machines, while two from I./KG 26 were lost, one of which carried the *Gruppen Kommandeur* of I./KG 26, *Obstlt* Hans Ahlefeld, and one more from II./KG 26 to RAF and Fleet Air Arm fighters whilst KG 30 lost two to *Flak*.

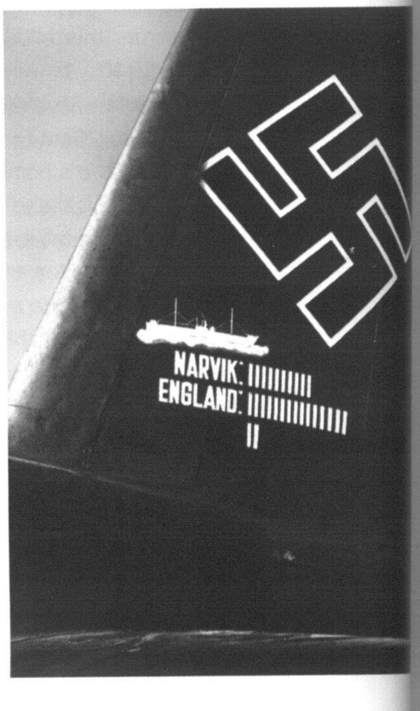
In the days that followed, German forces consolidated their gains and continued to fend off sporadic British attacks whilst maintaining attacks on the Norwegian armed forces. X. *Fliegerkorps,* reinforced by Heinkel 111s of *Oberst* Martin Fiebig's KG 4, were instrumental in attacking land and maritime targets with continued success. Their tasks were made easier by aggressive armed reconnaissance missions by various *Küstenfliegergruppen,* most of which had been re-equipped with more modern aircraft. For example, Kü.Fl.Gr 806 now flew the Heinkel He 111, albeit the older J version, whilst Kü.Fl.Gr 606 was now flying the more modern Dornier 17 Z. Most of the Heinkel He 59 units had been re-equipped with the Heinkel He 115, the ponderous floatplanes soon being relegated to air-sea rescue duties.

It was about now that aircraft which would be synonymous with German maritime operations began to make an appearance. In November 1939, *Hptm* Edgar Petersen, X. *Fliegerkorps'* Navigation Officer, championed and was given permission to form a very long-range maritime reconnaissance unit. The only aircraft capable of meeting this task was the Focke-Wulf 200 – a four-engined airliner and transport aircraft and six aircraft immediately formed the *Fernaufklärungsstaffel* which on 17 April 1940 was re-designated 1./KG 40. The Condor, as it became known, was soon in action over and around Norway.

Another aircraft which made an appearance over Norway and would also figure in the later air war over the Atlantic nearly two years later was the Junkers Ju 88 C-2. On 21 February 1940, a *Zerstörerstaffel*, commanded by *Oblt* Herbert Bönsch was formed at Perelberg with these heavy fighters and subordinated to KG 30. At the start of *Weserübung,* these aircraft were used on long-range escort, interception and offensive ground attack missions. As a maritime long-range fighter, they proved to be useful, shooting down seven RAF and Fleet Air Arm aircraft and destroying a number of



BELOW: Close-up of KG 40's famous 'world in a ring' emblem, reflecting the nature of its long-range maritime operations. When reproduced on either side of the aircraft it was 'handed' so that the ring pointed down and forward. The emblem was in continuous use until very late in the war.



BELOW: The t
fin of Focke-W
Fw 200 C-3
W.Nr.0039 of
I./KG 40 show
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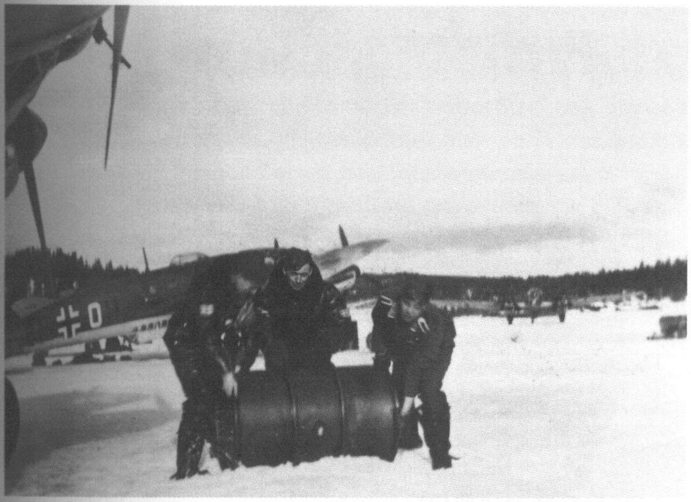


ABOVE LEFT AND ABOVE: Aircrew of KGr 100 waiting beside their Heinkel He 111s and in the photograph above left, pushing fuel drums out to the aircraft on a frozen lake in Norway in 1940. Note that the flight crew are wearing the one-piece dark brown 'Kalbin' (calfskin) KW s/34 flight suit, developed for winter sea operations. KGr 100 was a specialist bombing unit which had been subordinated to X. Fliegerkorps in 1940 and which had been employed on limited anti-shipping operations. The unit's emblem consisted of a red, white and black Viking ship on a blue disk, symbolic of the Pathfinder role of this unit.

aircraft on the ground in strafing missions. On 16 June 1940, Z./KG 30 quickly found itself back in Germany, to form the nucleus of the German night fighter force, and was re-designated 4./NJG 1. The long-range maritime fighter would not be forgotten and was destined to reappear over the Bay of Biscay in mid-1942.

The scene of battle in Norway switched further north following the landing of an Allied force near Narvik from 15 April 1940 onwards, helped by the majority of German aircraft now being based on southern Norwegian airfields. In the days and weeks that followed, there were numerous attacks on Allied shipping by conventional bombers which now included *Stukas* from *Hptm* Paul-Werner Hozzel's I./StG 1 and elements of II. and III./LG 1 and I. and II./KG 54. There were a number of minor successes, which included the damaging of HMS *Suffolk* on 17 April 1940 (much of the credit for this being given to *Fw* Willi Schultz of 6./KG 30), the sinking of the Norwegian destroyer *Garm* on 26 April 1940 and the damaging of escort destroyer *Black Swan* on 27 April. *Stukas* were particularly successful on 30 April, sinking two escort trawlers and the sloop *Bittern.*

At the start of May, attacks were carried out against the carriers *Glorious* and *Ark Royal* (prompting the Germans to have claimed to have sunk the latter a second time!) and then the *Stukas* sunk the French destroyer *Bison* and destroyer HMS *Afridi.* However, moves were afoot further south in Europe and a number of bomber *Geschwader* were transferred to *Luftflotte* 2. Allied forces were now starting to withdraw from southern Norway and concentrating around Narvik and offensive maritime operations, as well as attacks on land targets, were now the responsibility of *Oberst* Robert Fuch's KG 26, split between Trondheim in Norway and Aalborg in Denmark, *Hptm* Artur von Casimir's *KGr* 100 based at Trondheim, *Hptm* Hozzel's I./StG 1, also at Trondheim, and *Hptm* Petersen's I./KG 40 at Copenhagen. However, the intensity of the earlier attacks was not repeated. The most notable sinking being the cruiser HMS *Curlew,* a victim of a Heinkel He 111 flown by *Fw* Paul Wierbitsky of 2./KGr 100 on 26 May 1940. However, the RAF and Fleet Air Arm were still effective albeit in small numbers as one of the last combats of this campaign shows.

At about 0300 hours on 29 May 1940, two Hurricanes of 46 Squadron flown by Flt Lt Pat Jameson and Plt Off John Drummond, intercepted three Heinkel 111s of 2./KG 26 carrying out an armed reconnaissance of the Narvik area. After shooting down two, the third bomber returned and must have reported seeing the carrier *Glorious* because later that morning, six more Heinkel He 111s from I./KG 26 were sent to the Narvik area to attack ships; *Uffz* Alfred Kull of 1. *Staffel* was a crew-member in one of these six:

> *"Mid-May 1940, we flew from Stettin airfield to Aalborg in Denmark. After staying there for two days, we flew on to Trondheim. On our first mission we attacked a* Flak *cruiser off Narvik. Our flying height was about 5,000 metres and it was my job as an observer to drop the two bombs. We did not score any hits but the cruiser's AA-shells exploded about 100-500 metres beneath our aircraft.*
>
> *"On our second mission, on 29 May 1940, we were again briefed to attack ships in Narvik harbour but before we could reach our target we were attacked by a British fighter. Despite our defensive fire of three machine guns, our aircraft was hit in the course of several attacks and*

eventually both engines seized up. We were lucky that there were clouds beneath us where we were able to hide. After the combat we landed our aircraft on swampy ground.

"I was the last one to leave the He 111 and set fire to our plane using two incendiary bombs. At some distance and armed with a machine gun, I followed my crew who were hurrying on ahead, carrying with them a dinghy and two containers with food. Suddenly about ten Norwegians in civilian clothes, wearing white armbands, appeared and fired some shots into the air. One of my comrades shouted that we should not give up but I replied that it was senseless because they had the greater strength. Then I threw my machine gun, the pistol and my paperwork into a small pond. When the Norwegians approached we opened our food containers and handed out chocolate and cigarettes.

"After about half an hour a lorry came and took us to a village at a fjord where we were brought into a school building. A doctor came and dressed the wounds of one of my comrades who had been hit by a bullet. The same night we were taken to Narvik on a British destroyer. There we spent the next five or six days in a prison cell until the English troops left Narvik..."

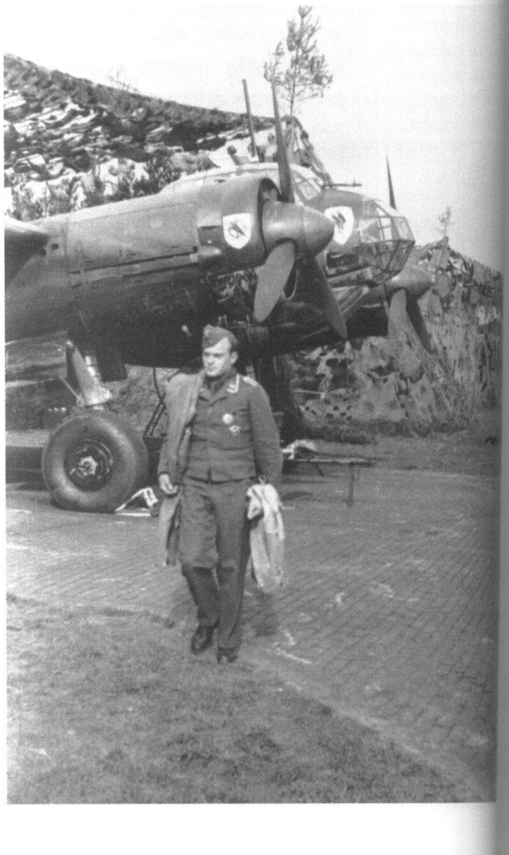
ABOVE: Two Oberfeldwebels (NCOs) and a Flieger (groundcrew) of 8./KG 26 inspect damage to the starboard propeller of a Heinkel He 111 received in operations over Norway in May 1940.

Following a series of major attacks by the *Luftwaffe*, the Allied evacuation of Narvik began on 3 June and was all but over five days later. The *Luftwaffe*, hampered by bad weather, tried to intervene but the final successes occurred on 9 June 1940 when *Oblt* Heinrich Schlosser of 1./KG 40 was credited with sinking the troop transport *Vandyk* and II./KG 26 sank the freighters *Ariadne* and *Prinz Olav.*

The *Luftwaffe* had learned valuable lessons in maritime warfare during the Norwegian campaign, albeit all attacks were by aircraft dropping conventional bombs as opposed to torpedoes. Mining did occur, probably one of the last mining missions by Heinkel 59s being carried out by 1./Kü.Fl.Gr. 706 on 28 May 1940. The efforts of some had not gone unnoticed. *Maj* Martin Harlinghausen had taken a personal interest in planning many of the operations and had ended the campaign as *Fliegerführer Stavanger*. He was awarded the *Ritterkreuz* on 4 May 1940 and it would be he that was personally involved in the coming development of the *Luftwaffe's* maritime war.

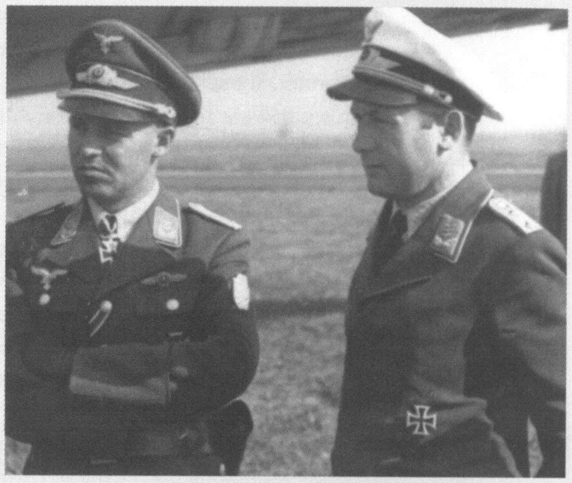
The scene of battle had already began switching towards France and the Low Countries when the Germans invaded on 10 May 1940, giving the *Luftwaffe* little chance to hone the lessons learned and continuing into be lulled in a false sense of security by the air superiority that it had enjoyed for the last eight months. The Battle of France had been raging for almost a month by the time the fighting in Norway had died down and was, in fact, starting to come to a close, following the British evacuation from Dunkirk. German bomber *Geschwadern* were committed to attacks on shipping in addition to land targets. The logbook of *Oblt* Sigmund *Freiherr* von Gravenreuth of 3./KG 30 records attacks against shipping and harbour installations at Ostende, Zeebrugge and Dunkirk, something which is supported by the loss reports for KG 30 which show that I. and III. *Gruppen* concentrated on maritime targets and that the first attacks on troop concentrations which resulted in losses occurred on 16 May 1940, when I *Gruppe* lost both 1. and 2. *Staffel Kapitän*, *Hptm* Egbert von Loesch and *Hptm* Karl Hielscher respectively. It would appear that 4. and 6./KG 30 had remained in Norway but curiously, 5./KG 30 appears to have operated over France.

9. *Fliegerdivision* was also involved in mining operations during the Battle of France and recorded just two losses, both on



BELOW: An NC of KG 30 carryin his one-piece fl overalls and a deflated Schwimmweste walks past a Ju 88 A-1 of 1./KG 30, at eith Westerland/Sylt Oldenburg in mi 1940. The Junke carries the insig of KG 30 depicti a diving eagle below the cock The I.Gruppe variation of this emblem featured the black eagle against a white shield outlined i black. On the starboard forwar engine nacelle i the emblem of 1. Gruppe depicting the umbrella - purportedly that Neville Chamberlain or Winston Churchi - in a set of crosshairs. It appears that the spinner tips are red.

Oberleutnant Heinrich Schlosser

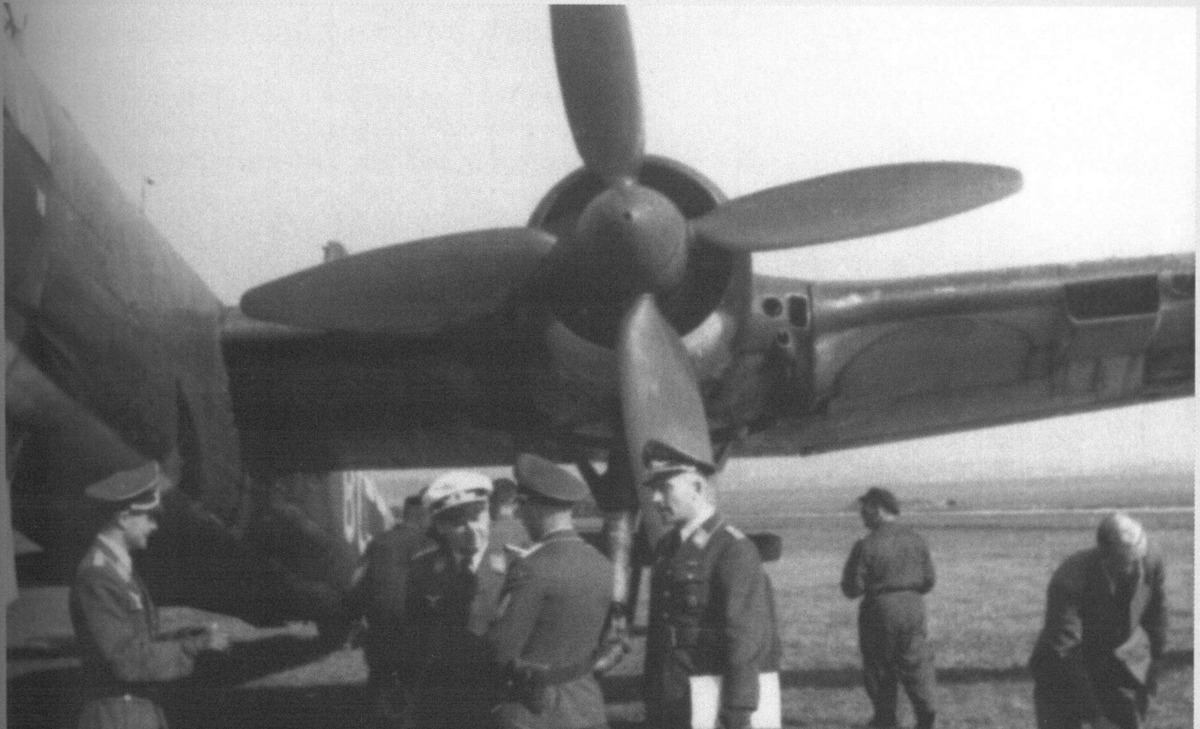


Heinrich Schlosser was born in Chemnitz on 1 August 1908 and began flying as a glider pilot at Grunau in 1929 before moving onto powered flying in 1930. By 1934, Schlosser had become a flying instructor and had joined the new *Luftwaffe* as *Leutnant der Reserve.* During the Polish campaign he flew with 1.(F)/122 and in May 1940, was posted to 2./KG 40.

Success for Schlosser came quickly, sinking the 13,242 BRT *Van Dyk* off Narvik on 10 May 1940 and credited with the sinking of the 2,218 BRT *Latymer* on 2 October 1940. Schlosser was given command of 2./KG 40 in early 1941 and by September 1941, he had had sunk in the region of 55,000 BRT of shipping for which he was awarded the *Ritterkreuz* on the 18th of the month. That same month, he was posted to *Hptm* Roman Dawczynski's IV./KG 40 (formerly the *Ergänzungsgruppe*/KG 40) as *Staffel Kapitän* of 10. *Staffel.*

In July 1942, Schlosser's *Staffel* helped form *KG* 50, essentially a *Gruppe* commanded by *Major* Kurt Scheede, to evaluate the Heinkel He 177. In December 1942, KG 50 was transferred from Brandenburg-Briest to Zaporozhye in southern Russia for winter trials, but was immediately ordered to carry out transport duties in support of Stalingrad. On the first such mission, *Major* Scheede was lost and Schlosser assumed command, having already been promoted to *Major* on the first of the month. The unit reverted to bombing duties but having suffered many losses, returned to Germany and began retraining in the anti-shipping role with the Henschel 293 anti-shipping missile.

In October 1943, KG 50 was re-designated II./KG 40, the original II./KG 40 having transferred its Dornier Do 217s to form V./KG 2. Command of the *Gruppe* was not given to Schlosser but to Austrian *Major* Rudolf Mons, a contemporary of Schlosser's in KG 40 who had been awarded the *Ritterkreuz* the same day as him and had been involved with the He 177 since October 1941. This was fortuitous for Schlosser, who was posted to a series of Staff and training duties for the remainder of the war, since Mons was lost in action on 26 November 1943 during the second anti-shipping operation of this new unit. This also resulted in the deaths of the *Staffel Kapitän* of 4. and 6./KG 40, *Hptm* Egon Schmidt and *Hptm* Alfred Nuss and *Hptm* Arthur Horn of 4./KG 40 – all of them experienced men and a blow to the new aircraft and *Gruppe.*



ABOVE: Oberleutnant Heinrich Schlosser, (left), seen while Staffelkapitän of 10./KG 40 on 28 September 1941 with Hauptmann Roman Dawczynski, Gruppen Kommandeur of IV./KG 40. Both are men are evaluating the then new Heinkel 177.

LEFT: In this view the Heinkel He 177 V-6 coded BC+BP, which both men are evaluating, can be seen in the background. Oberleutnant Heinrich Schlosser has his back to the camera.

21 May 1940 when the Heinkel 111 commanded by the *Gruppen Kommandeur* of KG 28, *Hptm* Gerd Stein, was lost mining off Boulogne, whilst another commanded by *Uffz* Rudolf Kaufmann was lost on a similar task off Dunkirk. Unfortunately, little else is recorded about 9. *Fliegerdivision's* part in the Battle of France, although it did continue to mine off the British coast.

However, the most notable attack against shipping during the campaign occurred on 17 June 1940 and for many years, and for obvious reasons, had been shrouded in mystery. Following the French surrender, those British forces that had not evacuated from Dunkirk or had been captured made their way south-west towards the French Atlantic port of Sainte Nazaire. A number of RAF units were amongst those fleeing, namely the ground crews from 73 and 98 Squadrons. One of those involved was Plt Off John Castle whose report was written following his return to the UK:

> *"On 16 June 1940 at approximately 0203 hours, 98 Squadron moved off in convoy from Chateau-Bourgon. The party consisted of 14 officers and 240 airmen approximately and arrived at Sainte Nazaire at approximately 0503 hours. They returned to an incomplete airport and passed the day waiting for a troop ship. It was learned from the Movement Control Officer that a troopship would be off Sainte Nazaire early on Monday morning.*
>
> *"Marching off according to timetable at 0205 hours on Monday 17 June 1940, we arrived at the docks at 0430 hours with about 63 personnel from No.67 Wing attached to our party. We embarked on a tender at 0803 hours, arriving on board the HMT* Lancastria *at about 0800 hours. All troops were aboard by 1200 hours including units of British Air Forces France HQ and 73 Squadron..."*

The HMT *Lancastria* was a 16,243 ton Cunard liner which was taking part in Operation Aerial, the evacuation of British solders, RAF personnel and civilians from Sainte Nazaire. The ship's captain, Captain Rudolph Sharp, had indicated that the *Lancastria* would take only 3,000 evacuees. However, counting had ceased when they reached 4,000 and it was estimated that there was in the region of 5,310 persons on board; some say the number could have up to 9,000. The *Lancastria* was not the only liner taking on troops-the 20,000 ton *Oronsay* was also moored off the coast and the presence of these targets had not escaped the notice of the *Luftwaffe.*

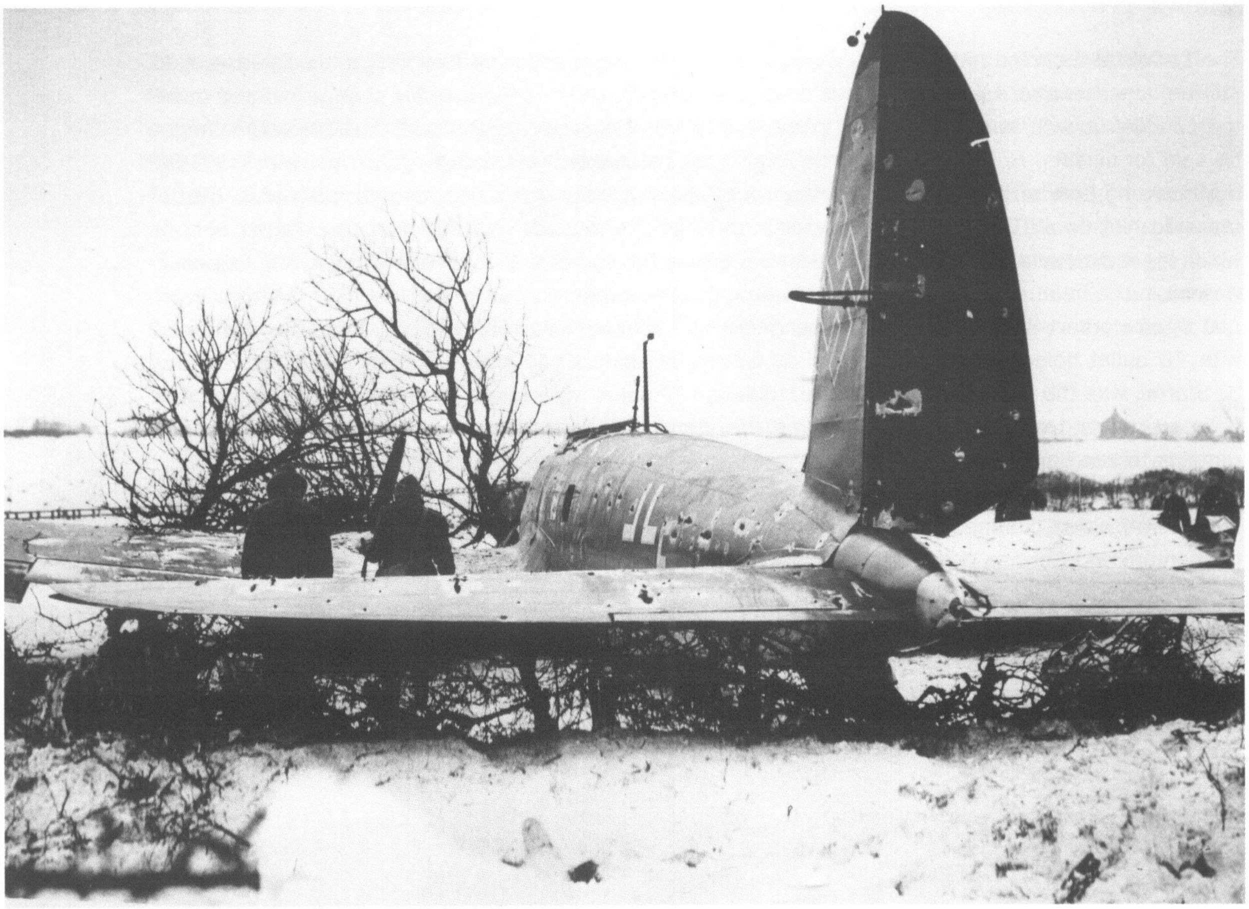
A report dated 18 June 1940 stated that shipping had been seen and attacked by aircraft from IV. *Fliegerkorps*, notably KG 30. It would appear that I. *Gruppe* was the main protagonist, two surviving logbooks from pilots of 3. *Staffel* make mention of an operation to the Loire Estuary, taking off from Le Culot around 1416 hours and landing back again at 1918 hours. John Castle continues:

> *"Just after 1330 hours, the first air raid alarm was sounded in which enemy aircraft bombed the SS* Oronsay *hitting the bridge. The 'All Clear' was given about 1500 hours. At 1545 hours, another alarm was sounded. Two bombs were dropped apparently not hitting the ship. Later other bombs were dropped, one hitting the bridge and another dropping through the ship which sank it. I was in the Dining Room at the time and it seemed only a few feet away. Plasterwork on the ceiling fell down and the officers in the room immediately hurried the women and children and a few wounded people up the main stairs at the same time trying to stem the rush from the decks below. Fumes from the bomb filled the dining room immediately.*
>
> *"The ship took a list to port and on reaching the boat deck, great confusion existed as to the lowering of boats due to the fact that all control seemed to have been wiped out by the bomb hitting the bridge, and although all boat crews were at their stations, no orders were given. The list made it impossible to lower more than six boats, one of which was later overturned. The bows were by then under water and it was then I left the ship. By the time I was 100 yards away, the ship was lying on its side, men standing on it. Steam then began to blow out of the side plates in the centre, many men being badly burned. The ship finally settled down until only a few feet were above the water line...*
>
> *"The survivors made for various ships around. Several of us reached the minesweeper* Cambridgeshire *which cruised around for an hour or more and eventually picked up 819 survivors. Bombs were still being dropped by Junkers 88s which appeared to be aimed very badly at the* Oronsay *owing to the fighters patrolling. These seemed to find it impossible to engage the bombers closely because of the clouds between 4 and 5000 feet. Anti-aircraft fire also seemed inaccurate because of the short time the enemy were visible..."*

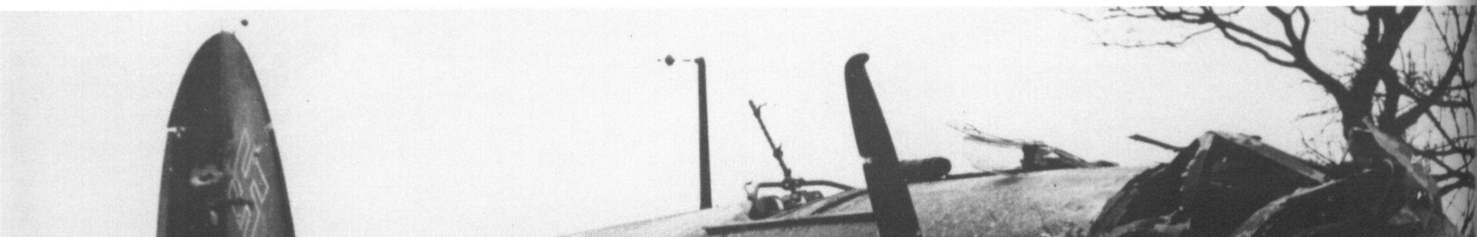
The *Luftwaffe* reported hitting the *Oronsay* with two 500 kg bombs but this liner, although damaged still remained seaworthy. The Germans also reported hitting a slightly smaller ship, presumed to be the *Lancastria,* with two more 500 kg bombs. Who was responsible for hitting the *Lancastria* cannot be said for certain. *Hptm* Arved Crüger of 3./KG 30 participated in the attack, his last with I./KG 30 but made no note of the results. However, *Oblt* Sigmund *Freiherr* von Gravenreuth, also of 3. *Staffel* reported hits on a 10,000 ton transporter after which his bomber was attacked by a fighter aircraft which his radio operator claimed to have shot down. In the combat, his observer, *Ofw* Ludwig Edmüller, was hit in the head and died later from his wounds. Two other aircrew from 3./KG 30, *Fw* Franz Erdel and *Ogefr* Herbert Krauss, were also wounded whilst a Junkers Ju 88 flown by *Uffz* Geffken returned with 70 bullet holes, courtesy of a French fighter. All of this confirms that I./KG 30, possibly just 3. *Staffel*, was the unit responsible. Sadly, only 2,477 souls were saved from the *Lancastria* and it is believed that at least 3,000 lost their lives. The *Lancastria* was broken up in situ in the 1950s and remains to this day an official war grave.

Nearly three weeks later, the next phase of the war began and for the first time in nearly a year, the *Luftwaffe* was destined to receive its first setback whilst the maritime air war was soon to gather momentum and German eyes began to look towards the British mainland.

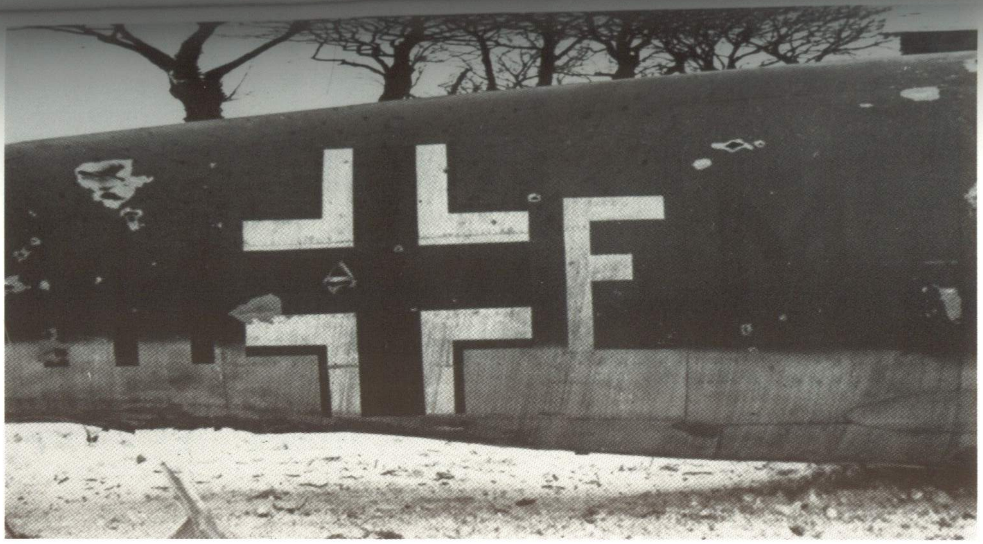
The view from the combined observers/gunners position in a He 111 as it banks to port over the Norwegian coast. The aircraft possibly belonged to KG 26 which was based at Stavanger-Sola and Trondheim-Vaernes in 1940 as part of General der Flieger Hans Geisler's Luftflotte 5.



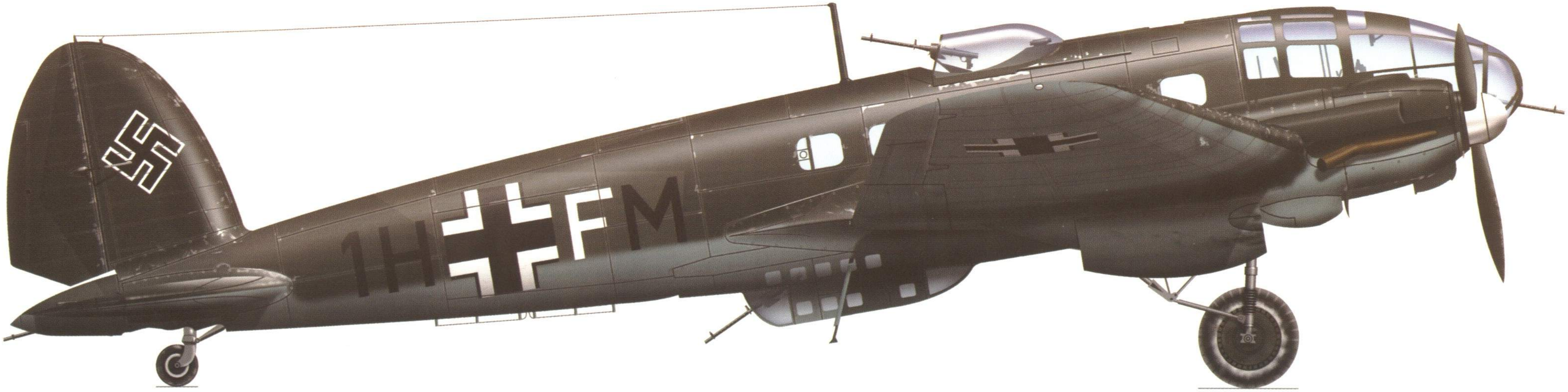
THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: Heinkel He 111 H, W.Nr.2 coded 1H+FM o 4./KG 26, flown Unteroffizier Hermann Wilms in the snow at Whitby on 3 February 1940 after being shot down by aircraf from 43 Squadr Royal Air Force.



LEFT: A detail of He 111 H, W.Nr.2323, coded 1H+FM

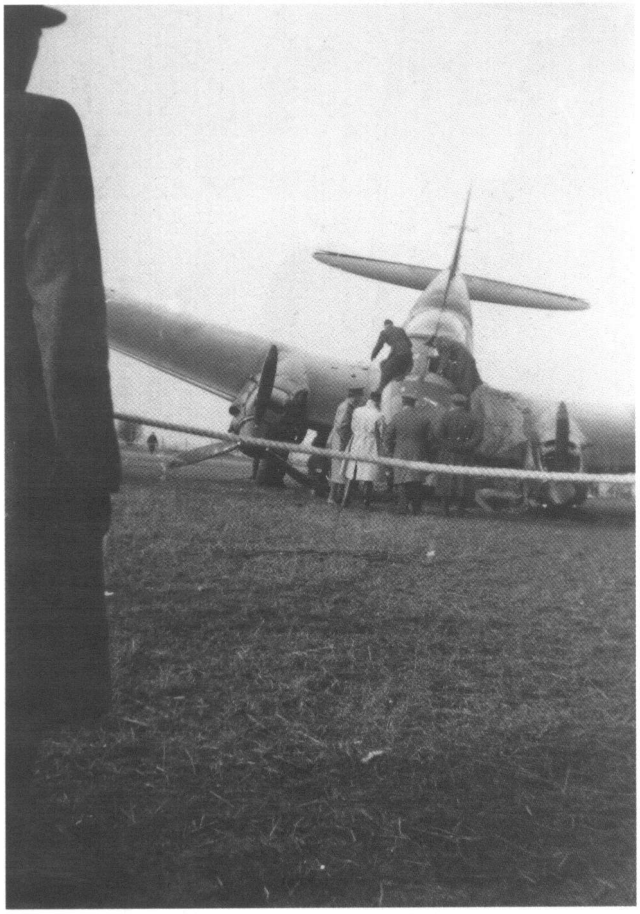


LEFT: A detail of He 111 H, W.Nr.2323, coded 1H+FM of 4./KG 26 showing the damage inflicted to its fuselage as a result of the action on 3 February 1940. This is indicative of the amount of .303 rounds needed to be expended by RAF fighters in order to bring a bomber down. This in time led to the need to introduce heavier weight calibre weapons in order to achieve quicker confirmations. Cannon armed fighters were initially problamatic and not popular with pilots and groundcrews alike, but in time with development it became the preferred weapon.

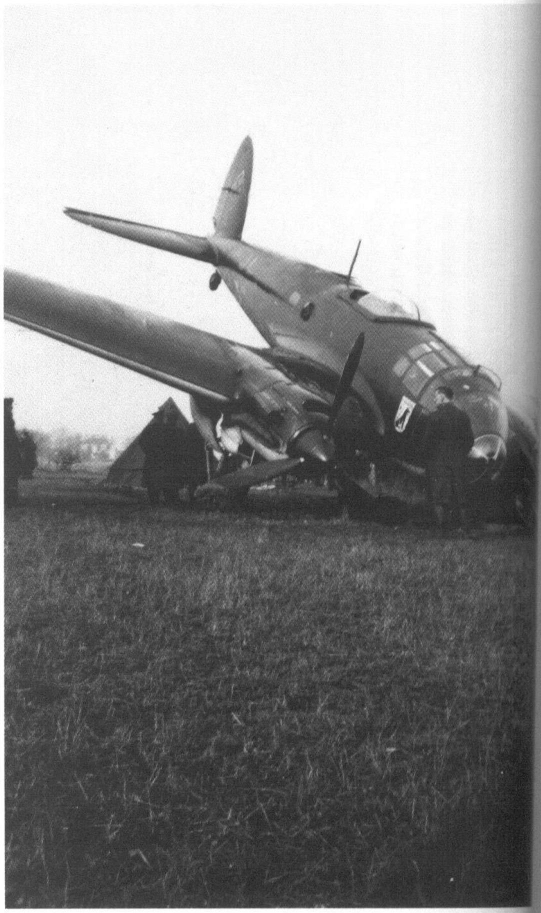


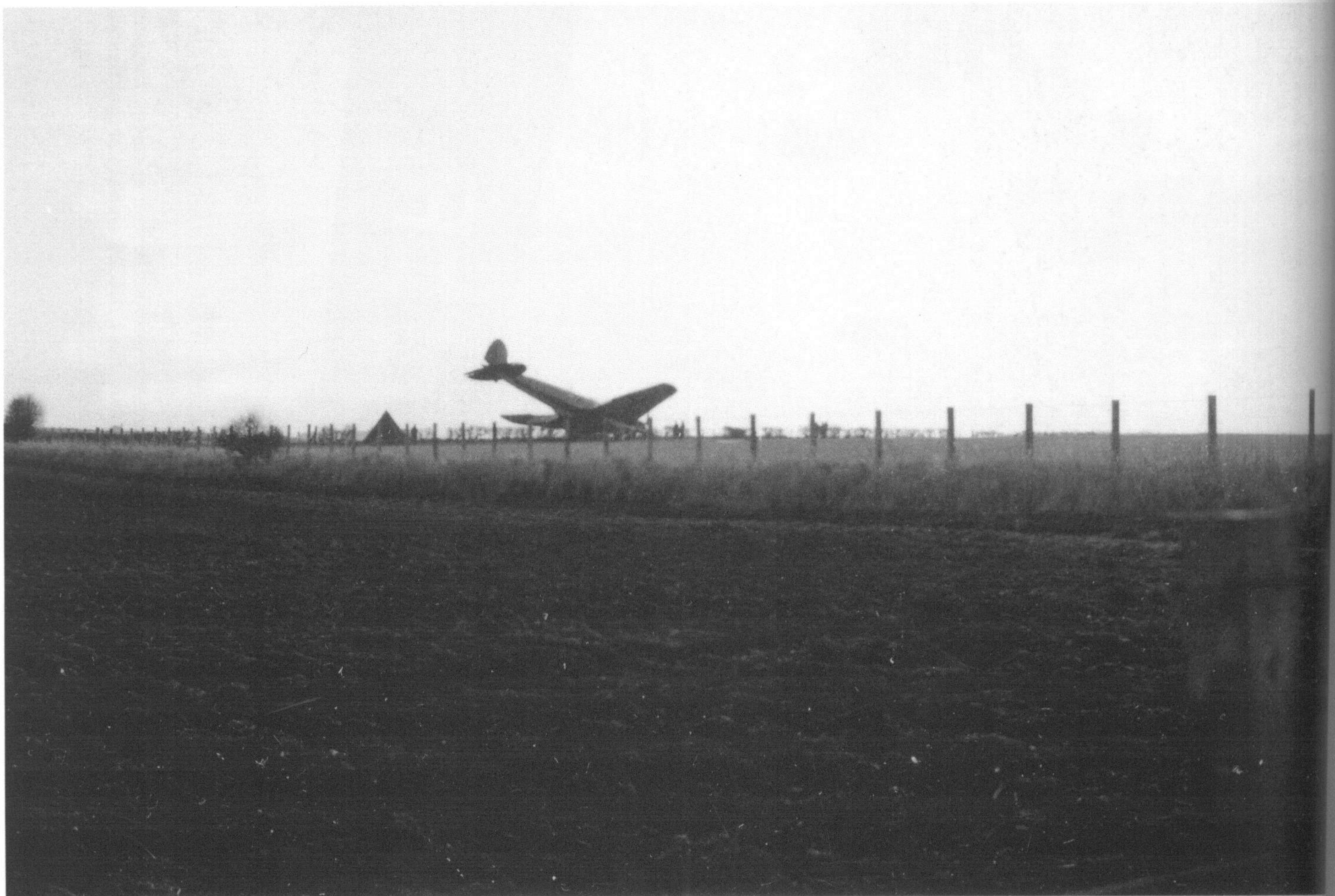
Heinkel He 111 H, W.Nr.2323, coded 1H+FM of 4./KG 26

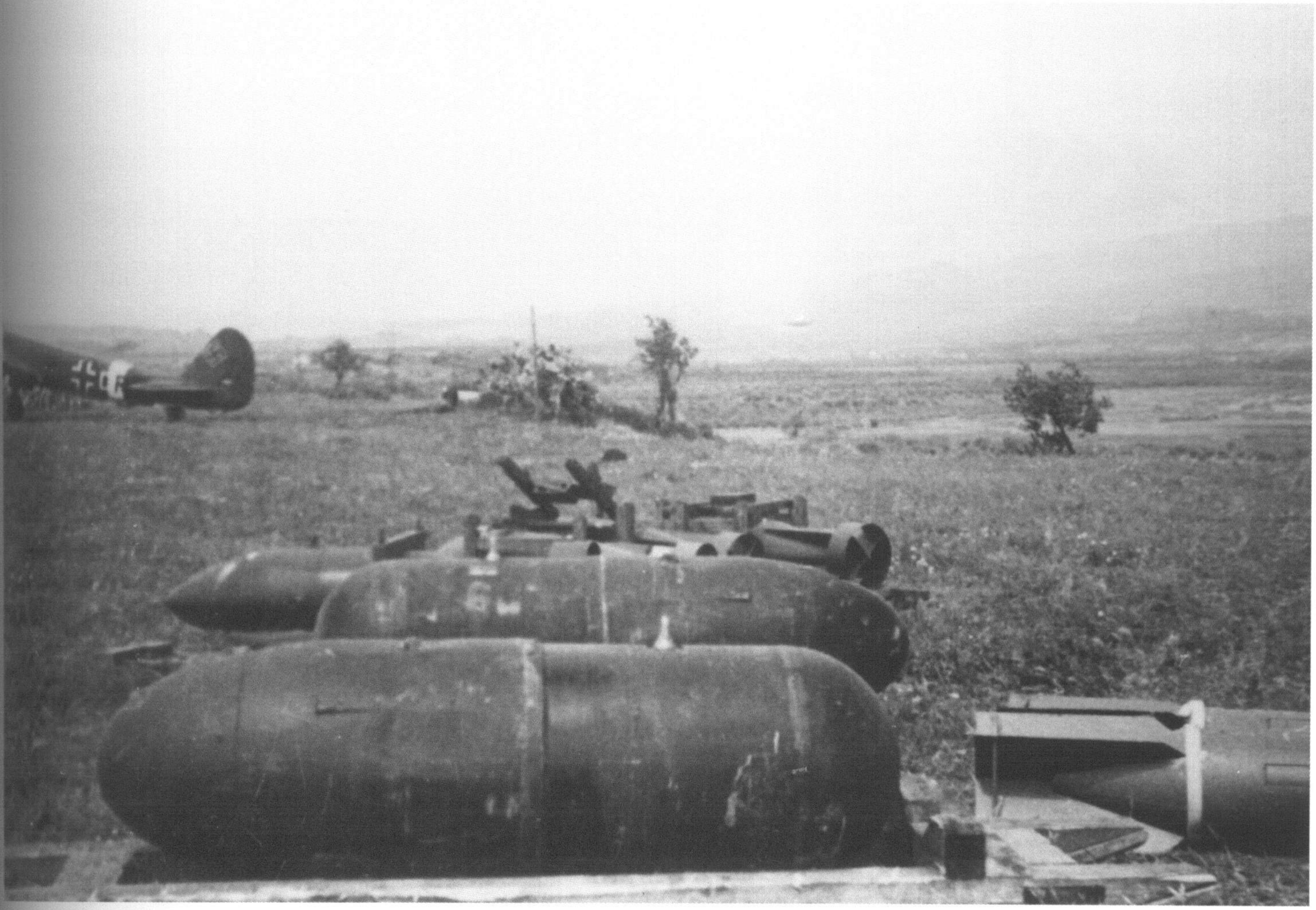
Still carrying the standard summer splinter pattern of RLM 70/71 with RLM 65 applied to its underside, this He 111 H-2 caries the code 1H+FM with the letter 'F' being painted white in the Staffel colour. The spinner, with the exception of the back-plate, is also white. Although not visible, it is probable that the I./KG 26 emblem of the 'Seated Lion' on a yellow shield would have been painted on the nose on both sides.



THIS PAGE: Heinkel He 111 H-1 of 5./KG 26, W. Nr. 6853 coded 1H+EN and piloted by Unteroffizier Helmut Meyer stands on its nose after being shot down on UK soil on 9 February 1940. The aircraft was on an anti-shipping sortie when it was engaged by Squadron Leader A D Farquhar of 602 Squadron. The Heinkel was subsequently repaired and flown as AW177 and was destroyed in an accident at Polebrook on 10 November 1943.



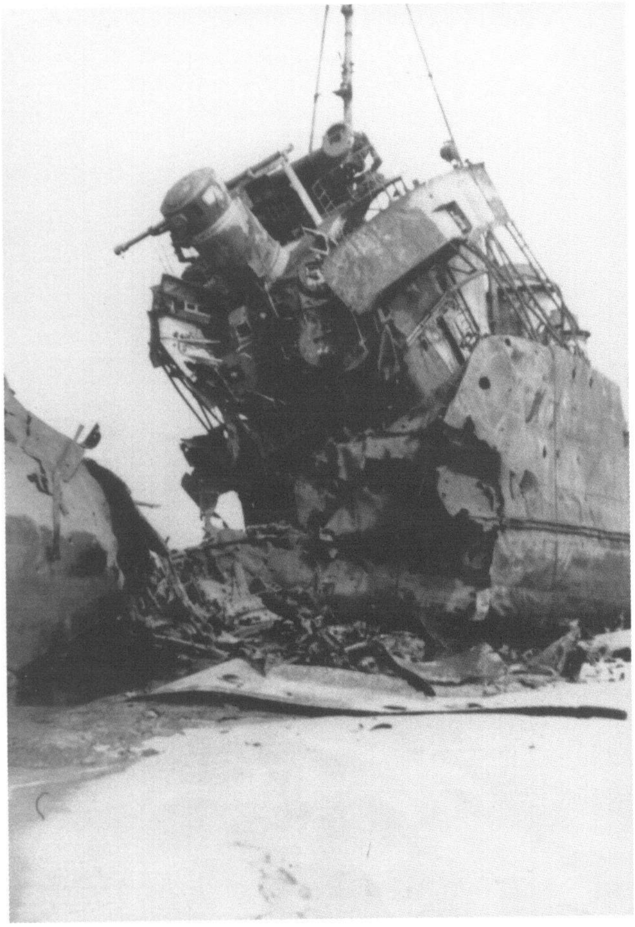


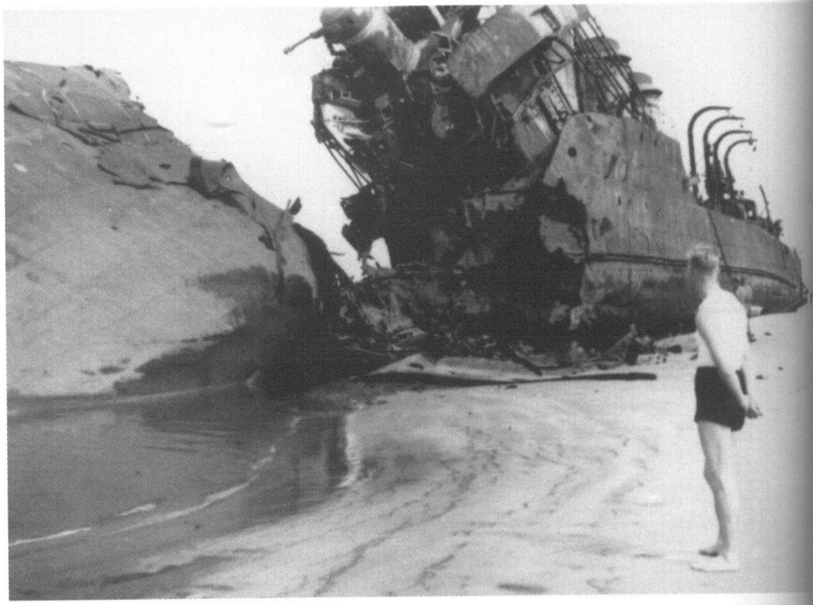


ABOVE: A Junkers Ju 88 of III./KG 30 stands by between operations. In amongst the ordnance in the foreground lie some Luftmine A (LMA) aerial mines. A smaller version of its larger brother the Luftmine B and using the same form of deployment, it weighed in at 500 kg and measured 1.8m in length.

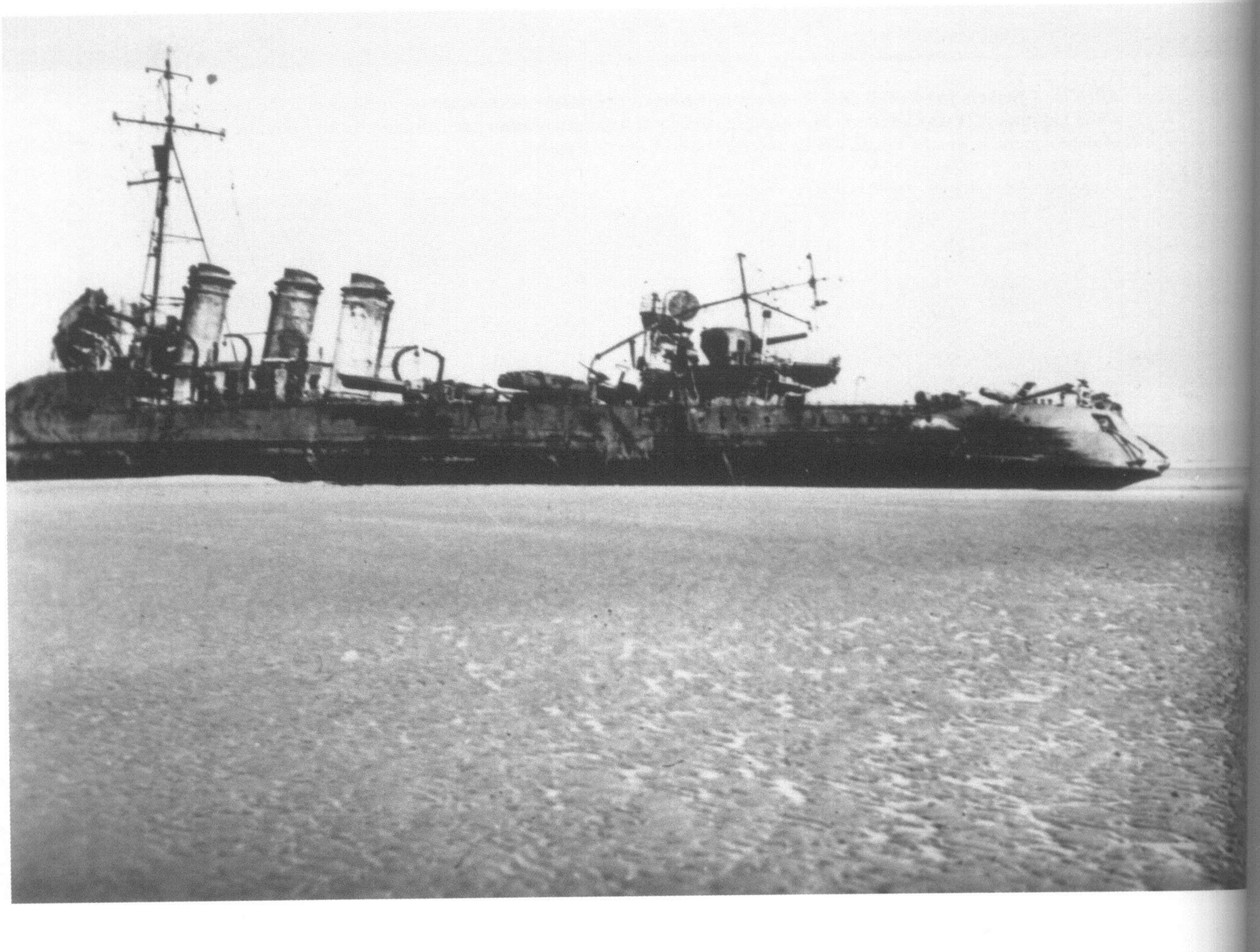
ABOVE: Dorsal gunner's view from a Heinkel He 111 of I./KG 4 during a bombing attack on Norway in May 1940.

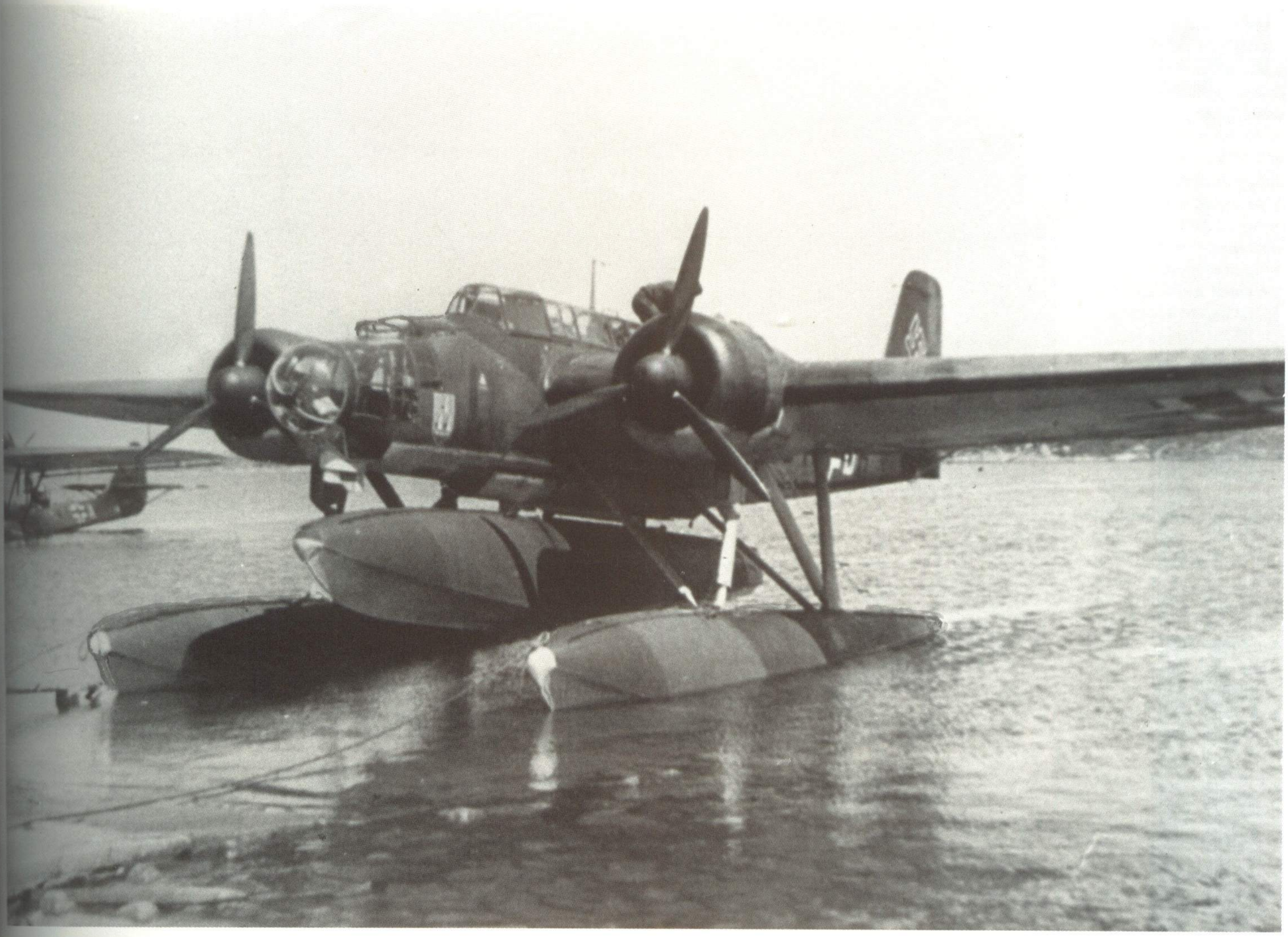
RIGHT: View from the dorsal position of the same Heinkel He 111 of KG 4 after a bombing attack on Bodo in Norway on 22 May 1940.



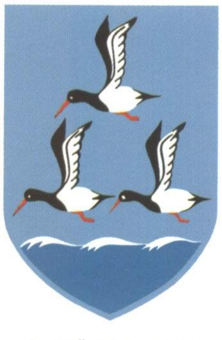


THIS PAGE: Victim of an aerial attack, the shattered remains of the French destroyer 'Bourrasque' lie beached at Dunkirk, 1 June 1940.

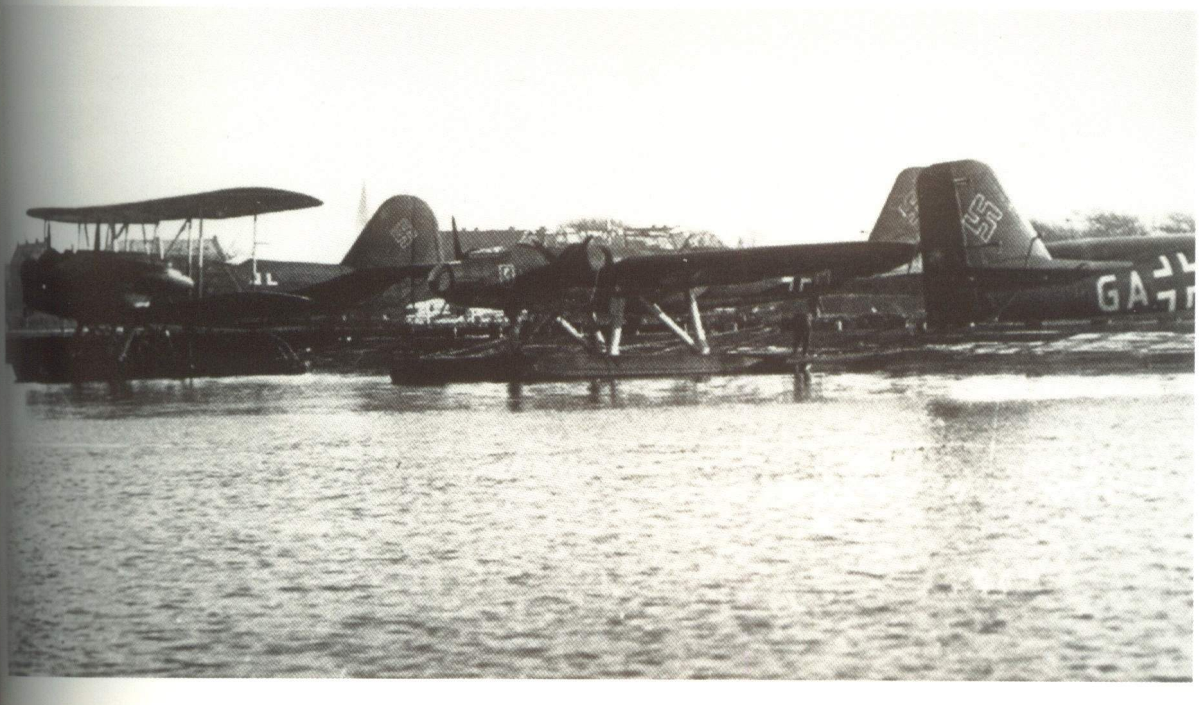




ABOVE: Due to the choppy sea conditions and the risk of surface debris and rocks, floatplanes often suffered damage to their floats necessitating repairs or complete replacement. Here a He 115 C from 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 506 has been fitted with a spare float ready for delivery to one of the many bases along the Baltic Coast in 1939 or 1940. The aircraft carries the Staffel shield-shaped emblem of three oystercatchers flying against a blue sky above the waves.

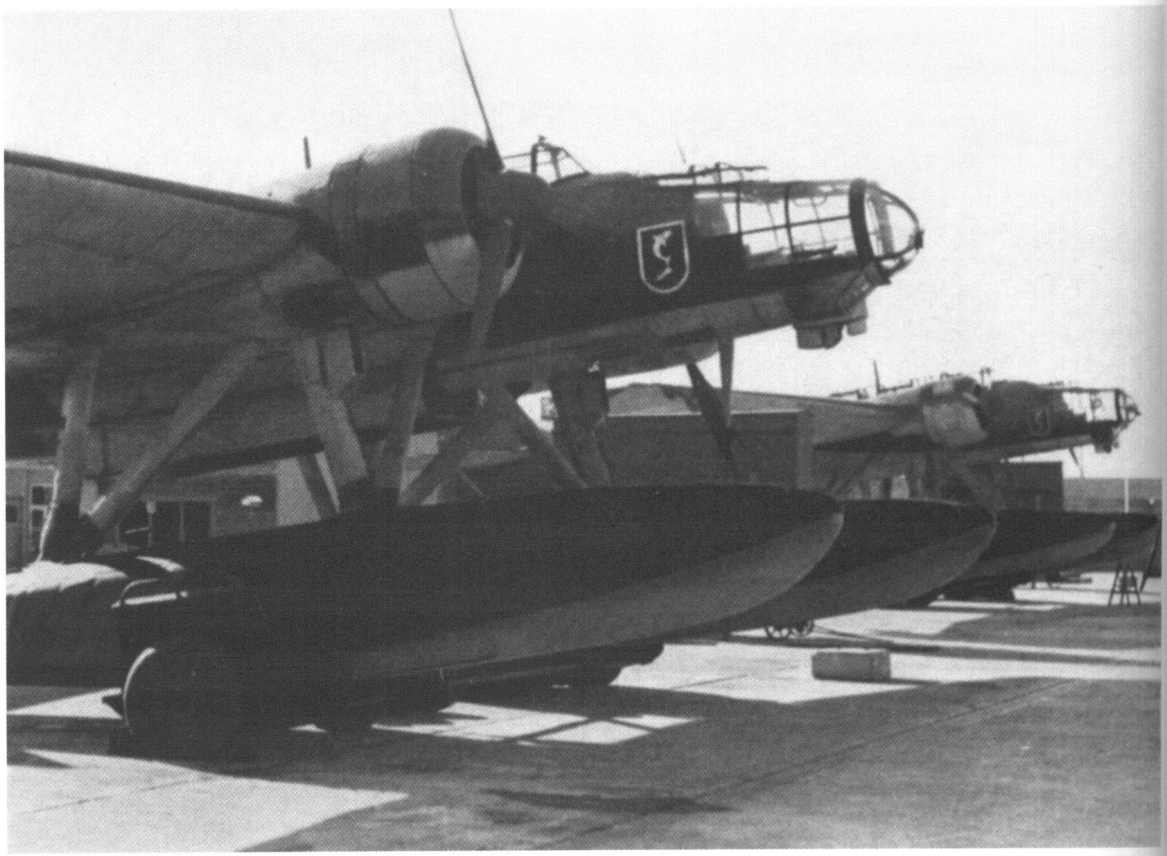


1./Kü.Fl.Gr 506 emblem

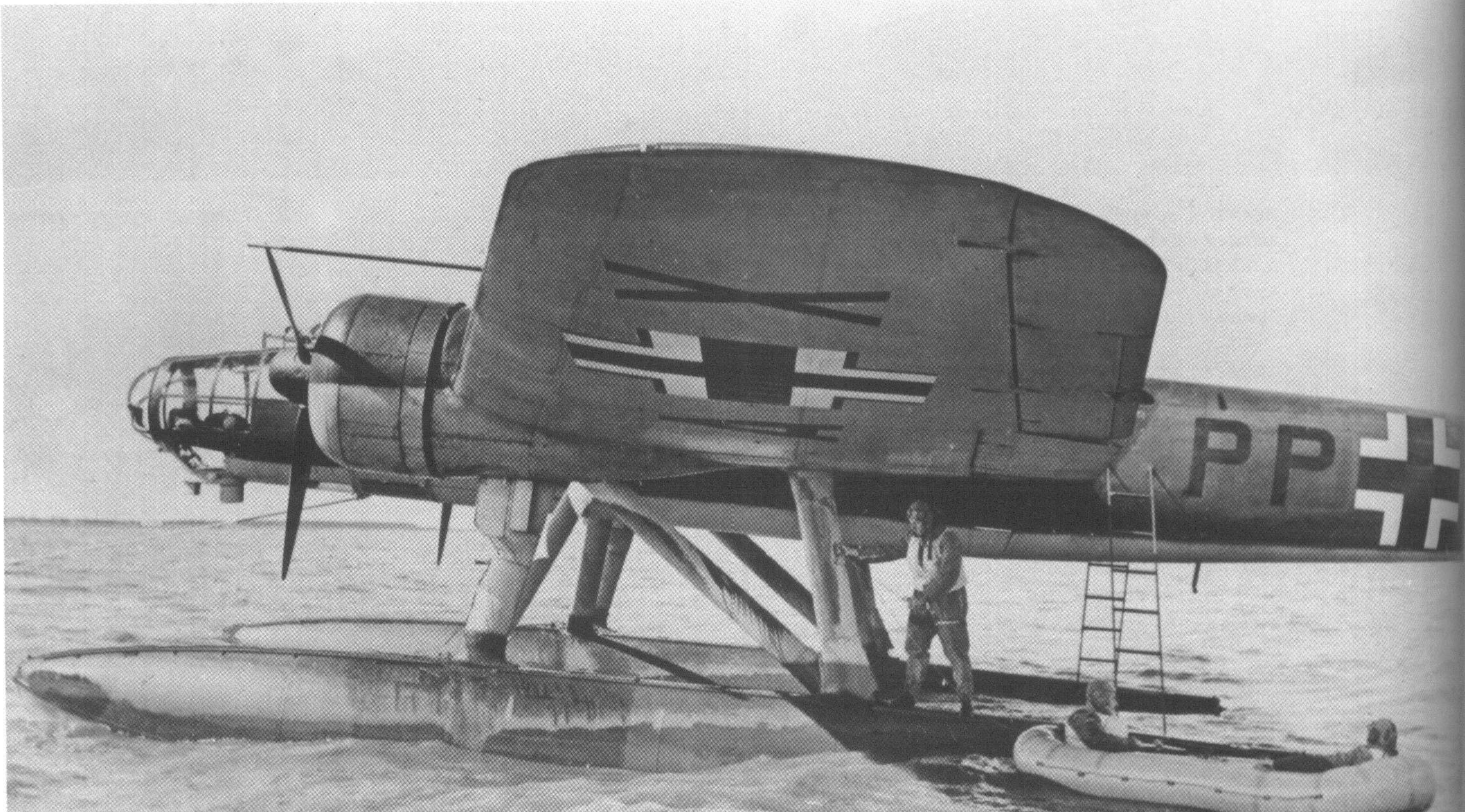


LEFT: In this view a Heinkel He 59 and two Heinkel He 115s of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 706 lay idle between operations at their base at Aalborg in Denmark in 1940. The unit carried as its emblem a harpooned shark leaping from the sea within a shield. It can be discerned faintly on the nose of the central He 115.

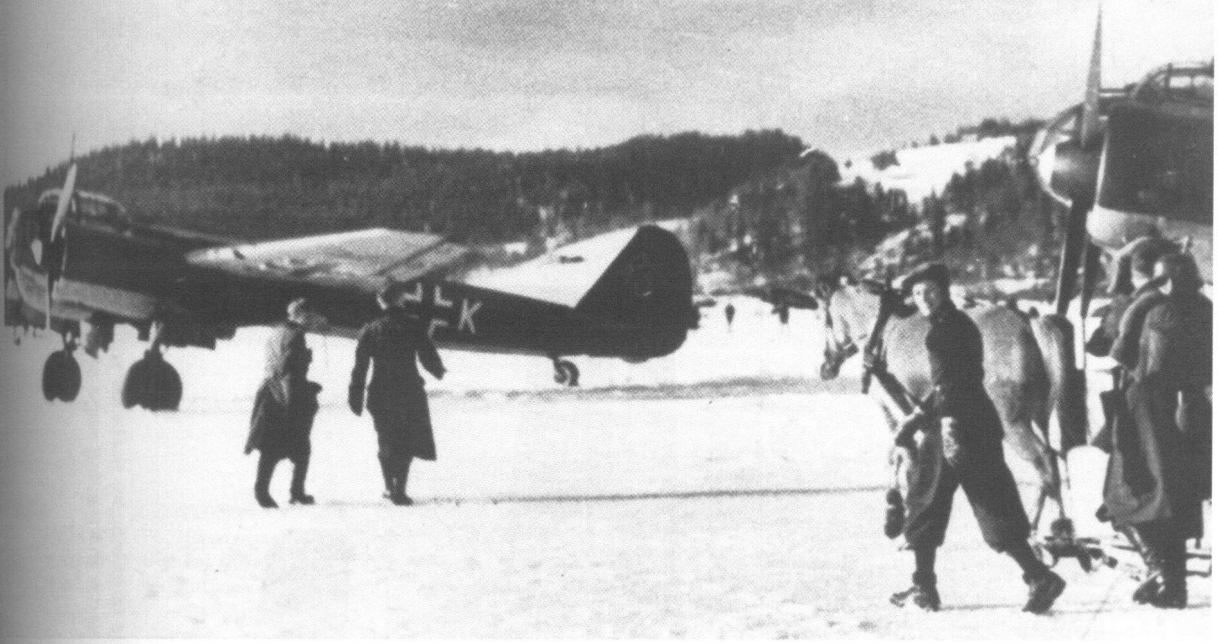
RIGHT: Two He 115 Bs, the nearest known to be coded 6I+GH, of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 706 stand idle on their beaching trolleys somewhere on the Baltic Coast in 1940-41. Both carry the standard scheme of 72/73/65 and whilst both appear unarmed, all machine guns would have been removed for stripping/ cleaning when the aircraft were non-operational due to the harsh nature of their operating environment.



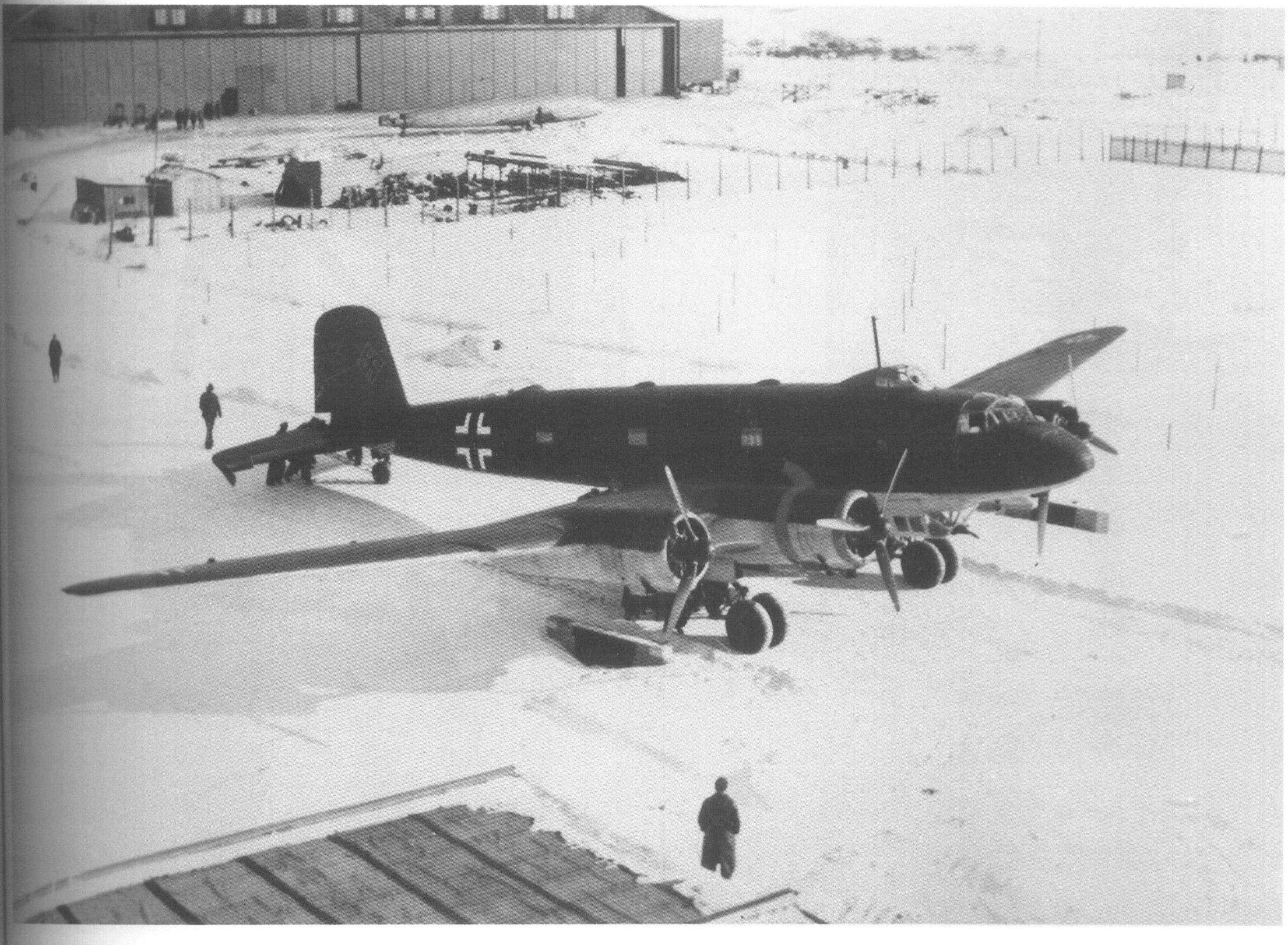
BELOW: The crew of this He 115 B-1, of an unidentified unit have paddled to their aircraft in an inflatable dinghy and one man ties a mooring line to a main float strut. The Heinkel still bears its factory call-sign, PP+AX. Note the ladders which were permanently fitted to both sides of the fuseláge and floats to allow access to the upper wing.

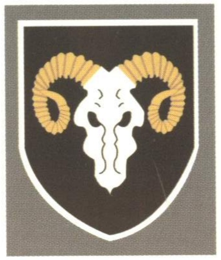


LEFT:
Junkers Ju 88 A-1s of KG 30 are shown here operating from a frozen lake in Norway in April 1940.

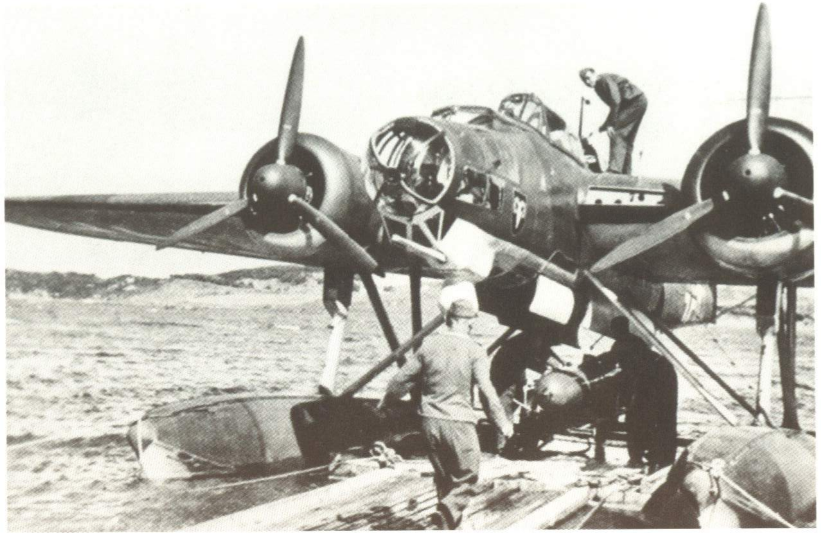


BELOW: This pristine early production Fw 200 BS+AG W.Nr.0002 was rolled out on a winter's day at the Focke-Wulf factory at Bremen in early 1940. It was built as the V11 and subsequently became the first B-1. It was later converted to become the first C-1 and was taken on by 1./KG 40 on 19 February 1940. Its subsequent fate is unknown.

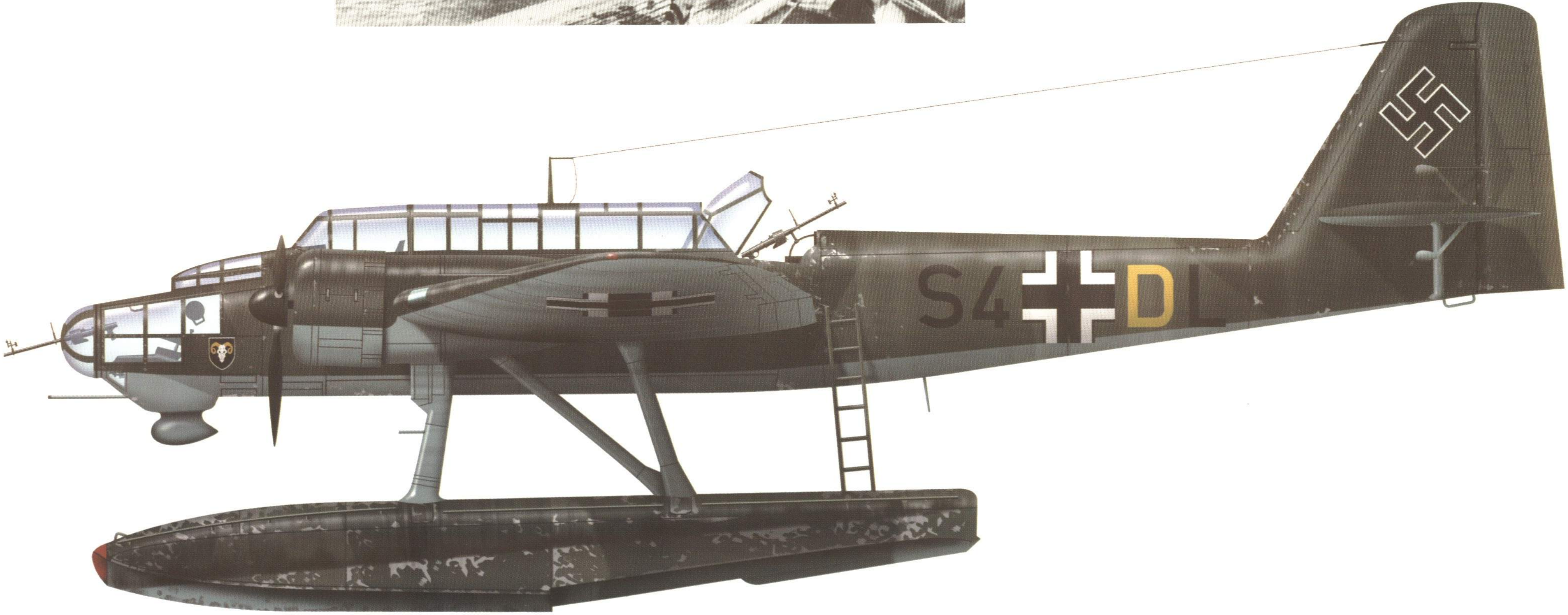




3./Kü.Fl.Gr 506
Emblem

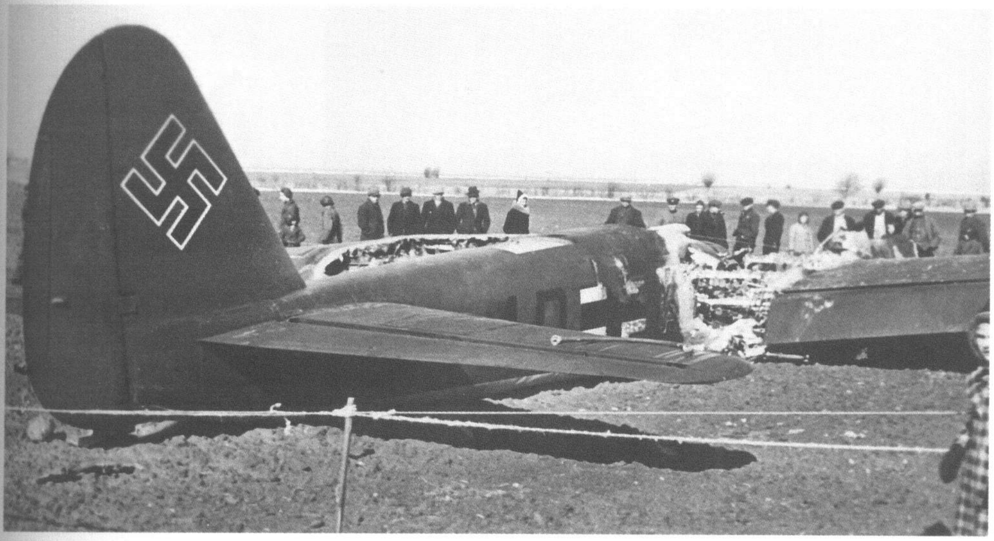


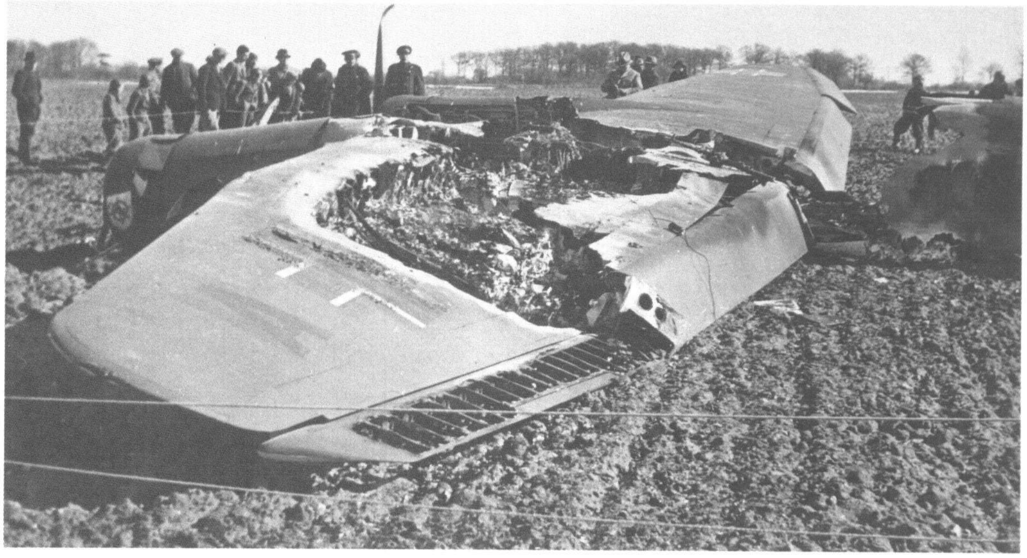
LEFT: Weapons handlers load a torpedo into the weapons bay of an He 115 C-1, S4+DL, belonging to 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506, the ram's skull badge of which may be seen on the nose. Note the additional gondola under the port side of the nose which housed a fixed 20 mm MG 151 cannon. This weapon at first proved troublesome during testing and earlier aircraft were fitted with the 15 mm version.



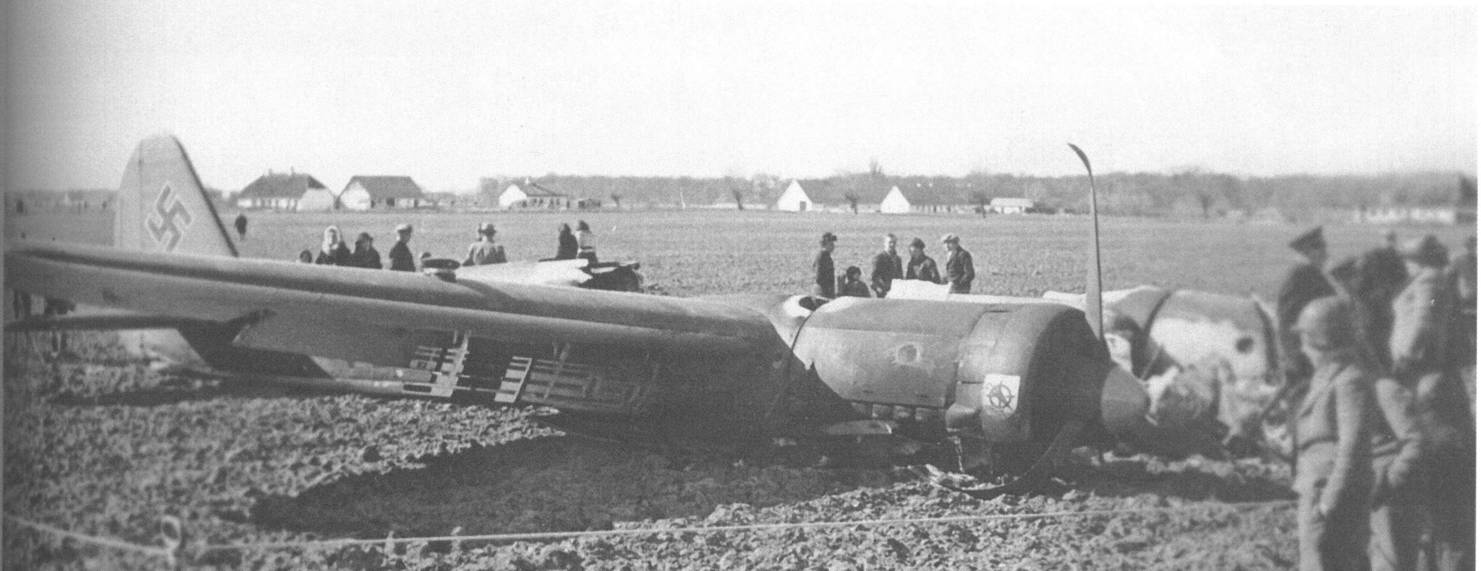
Heinkel He 115 C-1 of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 506

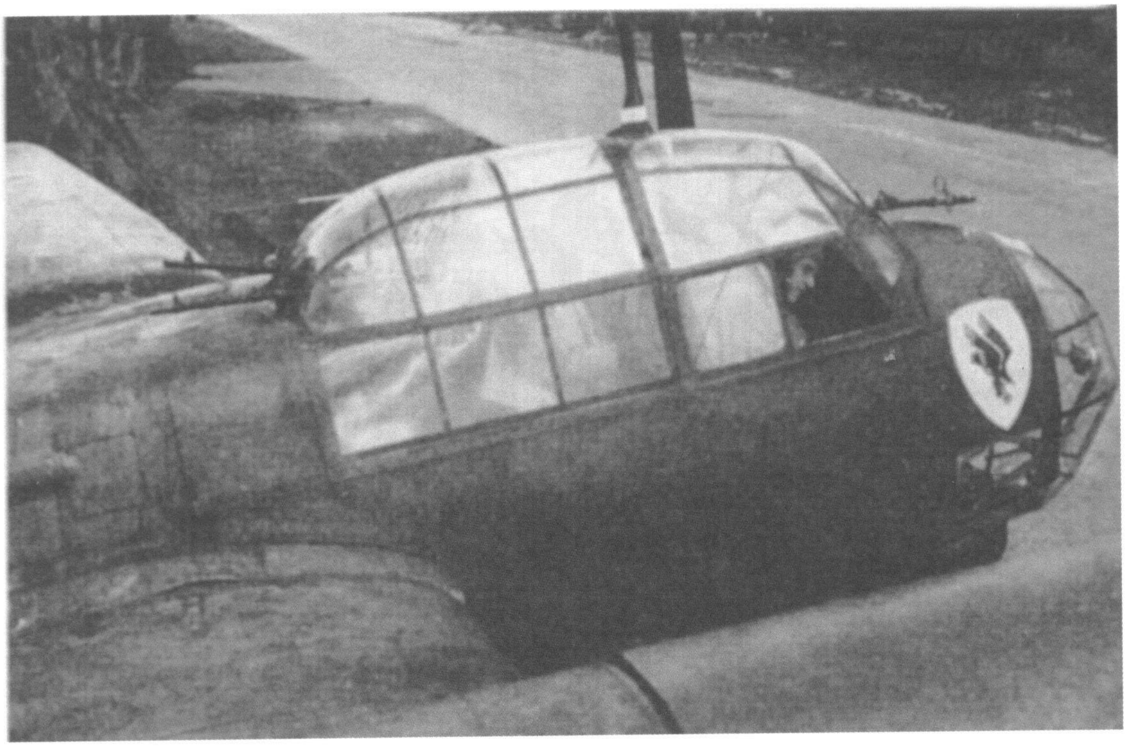
Coded S4+DL, this aircraft carries the standard splinter pattern RLM 72/73 dark greens on the upper surfaces with RLM 65 pale blue underneath including the floats. The dark greens of the upper surface have been taken under the leading edge of the wings. The red rubber buffer tips of the floats are clearly visible.



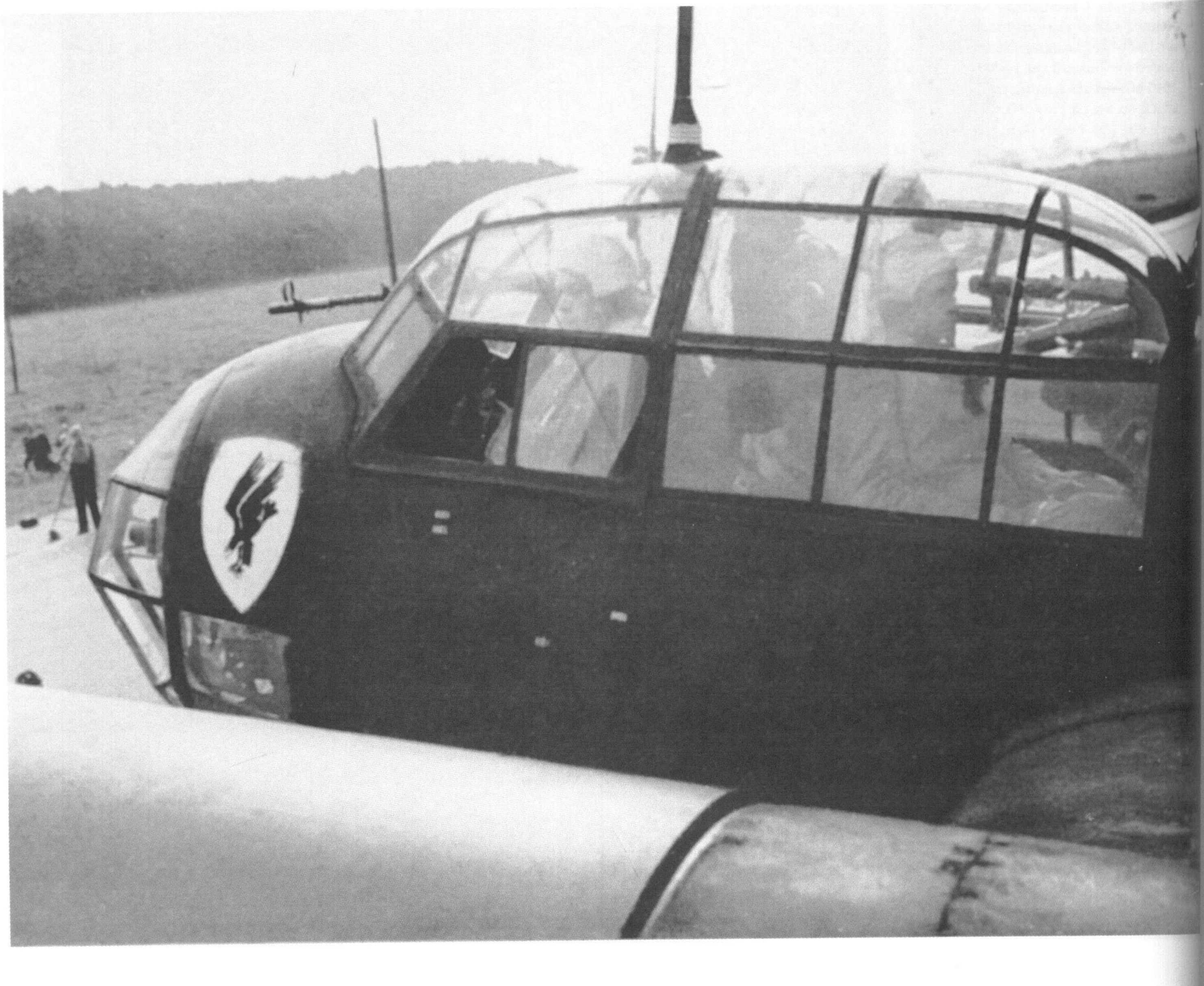


THIS PAGE: The burnt out remains of a Ju 88 A-1 of I./KG 30 flown by by Unteroffizier Werner Mattner attract curious locals on the Danish of Laaland. He forced landed the aircraft on 16 March 1940 after participating in an attack on Scapa Flow. Note the umbrella in a bomb sight emblem (*BELOW*) on the starboard cowling of the I Gruppe.

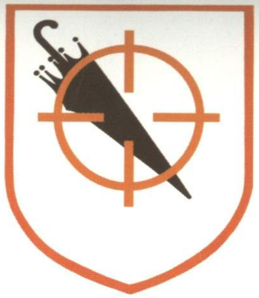




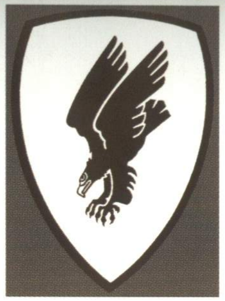
THIS PAGE: The diving eagle badge of the 'Adler' (eagle) Geschwader, KG 30, was to become a familiar sight in Norw from the time of the invasion of that country in April 1940. The unit was to undertake many operations over the North Sea and the English Channel and mainland as well as against shipping an harbour installations on the French coa in the summer of 1940. It later took pa in action against British convoys attempting to supply Soviet forces via t Arctic Ocean to the ice-free port of Murmansk. These photographs show a late-production Ju 88 A-1 of 1./KG 30 preparing to taxi out on another missi The aircraft carries standard twin rear-firing 7.92 mm MG 15 machine guns i the rear cockpit.



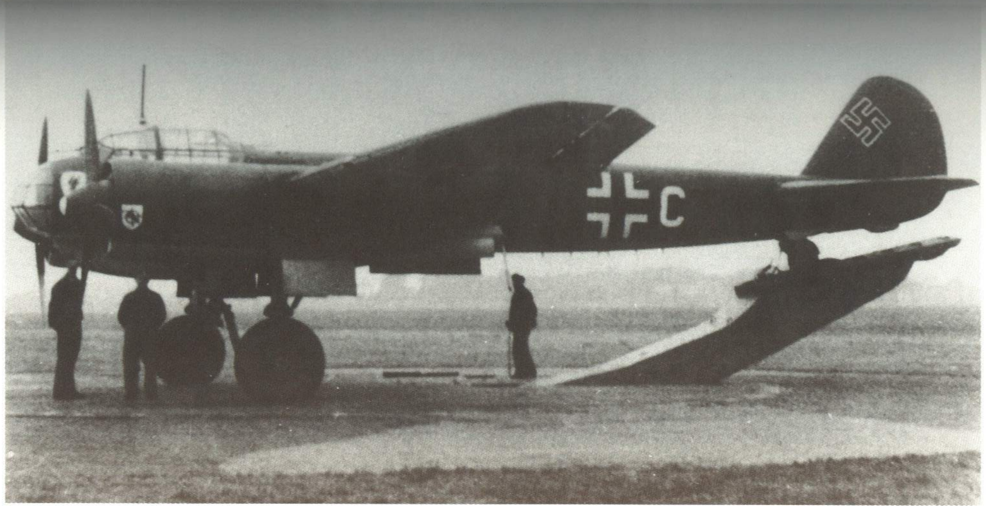
LEFT: A Ju 88 A-1 of 1./KG 30



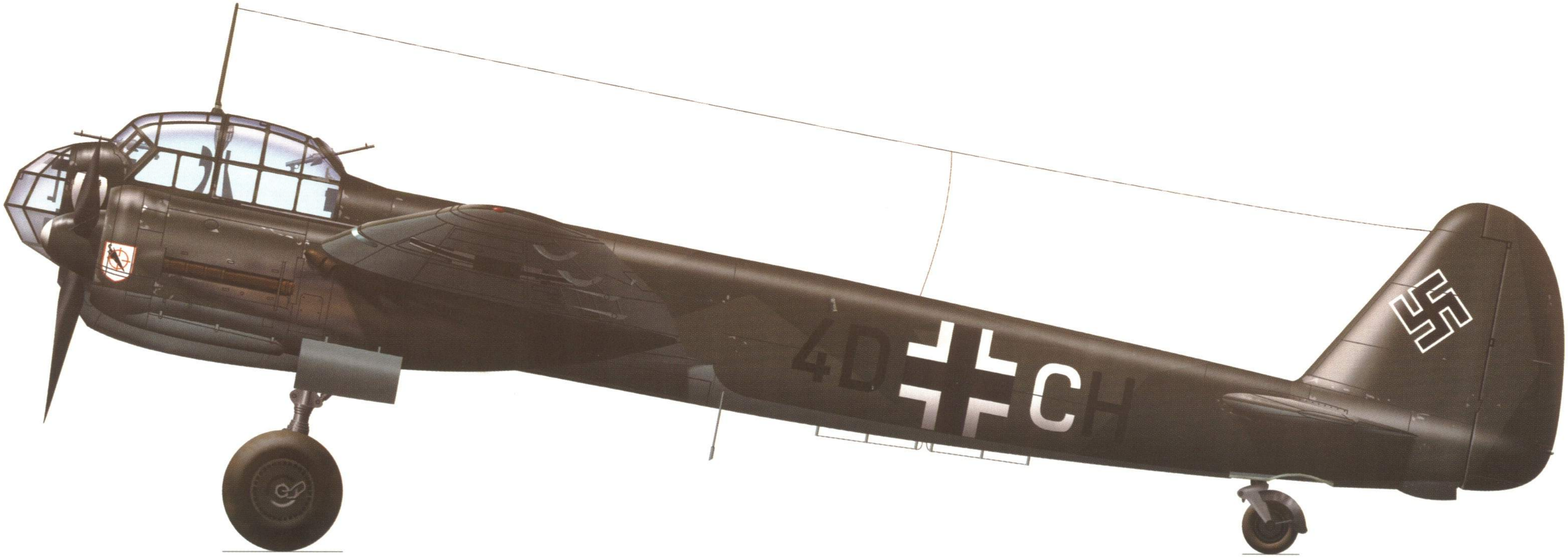
Emblem of I. Gruppe



Emblem of KG 30

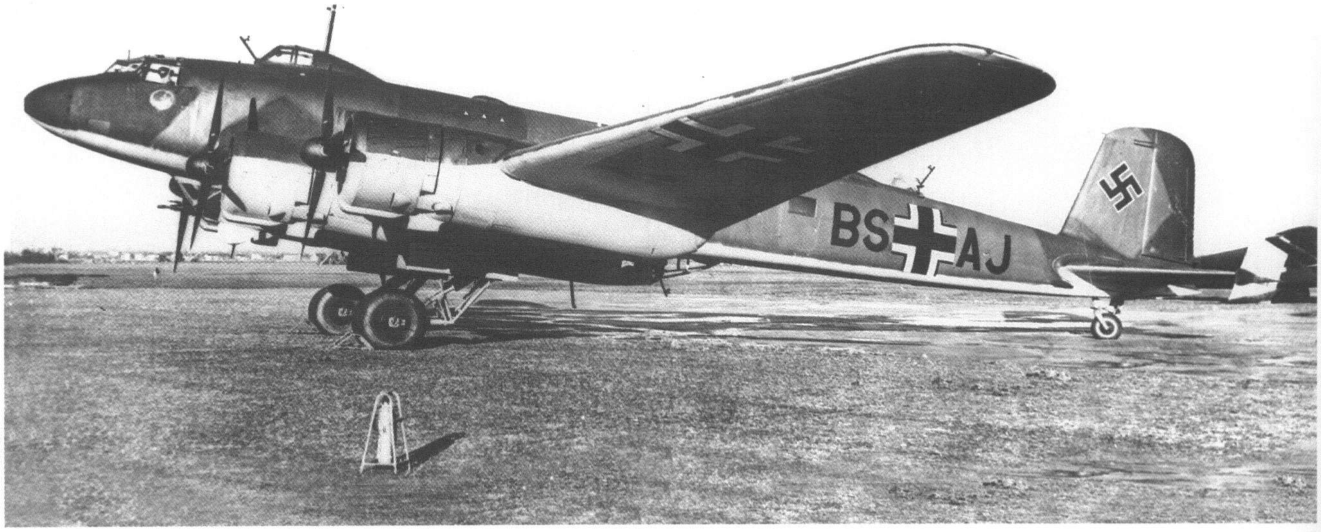


LEFT: A Ju 88 A-1 of 1./KG 30 undergoes a compass swing on an airfield in Germany during 1940. The aircraft carries standard RLM 71/72/65 colouring and wears both the KG 30 'Adler' emblem forward of the cockpit and the emblem of 1.Staffel on the forward engine cowling. Note the coloured spinner tips and individual aircraft letter 'C' possibly in white.



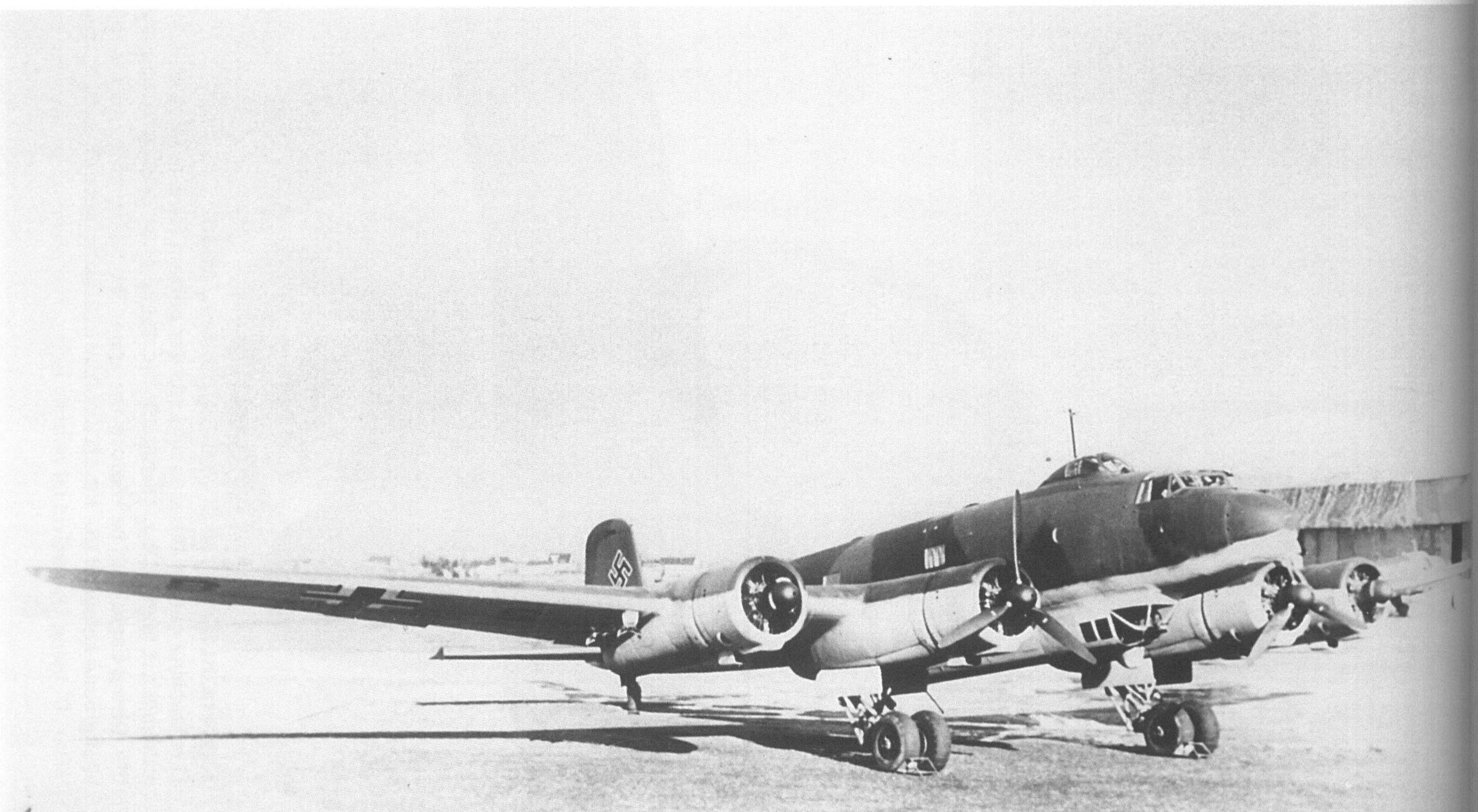
Junkers Ju 88 A-1 of 1./KG 30, France, 1940

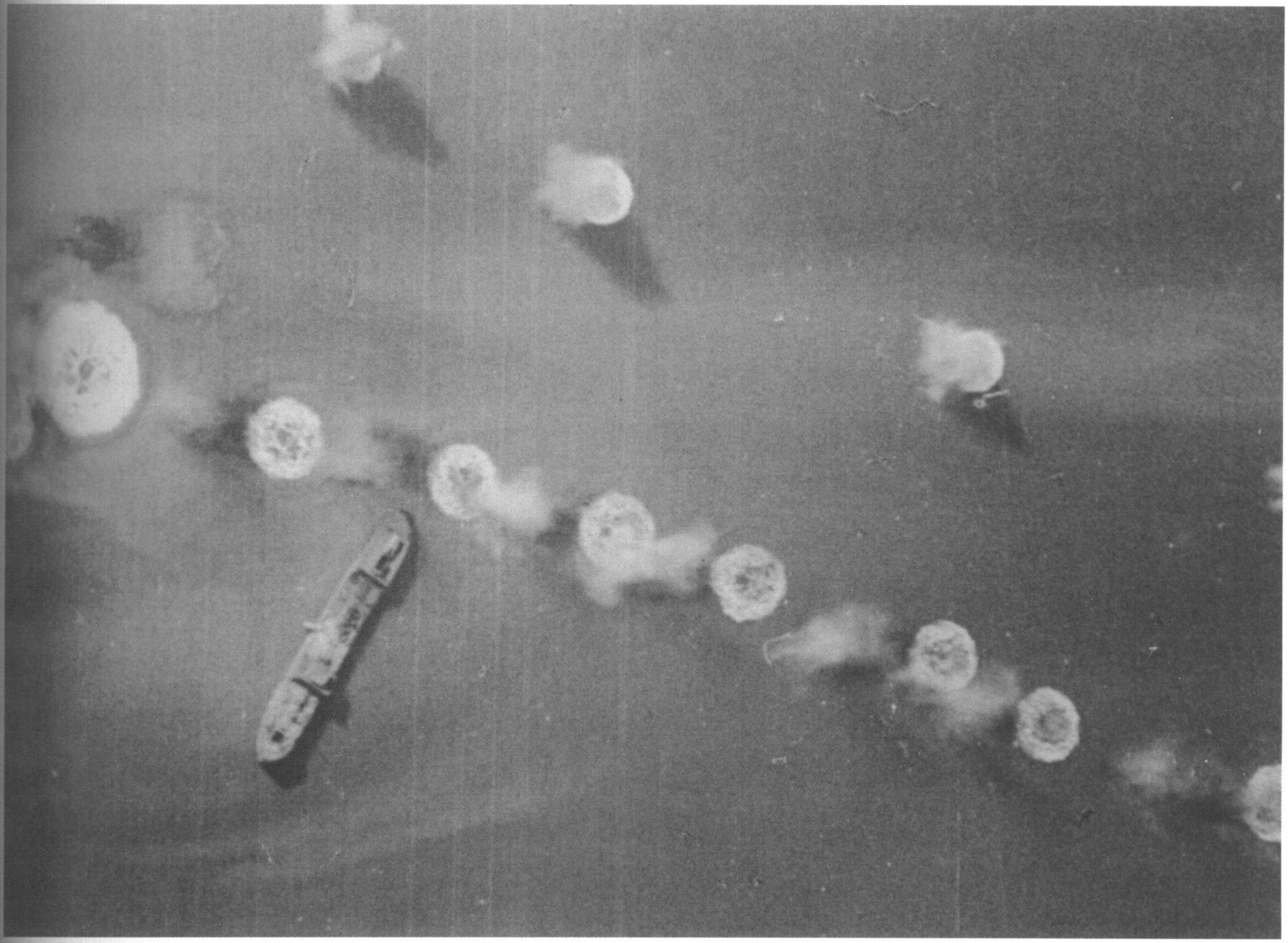
This machine carries the standard splinter pattern for a Ju 88 A of RLM 70/71 with RLM 65 on its undersurfaces. The aircraft code, although not legible, is probably 4D+CH. This can be derived by identifying various important elements. Firstly, the unit badge of KG 30, the 'Diving Eagle' can be seen on the nose. The badge of 1./KG 30 can be seen on the side of the engine cowling which means that the background colour of the KG 30 emblem was white indicating the I. Gruppe. The letter 'H' is also the 1. Staffel letter, with the white letter 'C' being the individual aircraft letter. The spinner tips are also painted white.



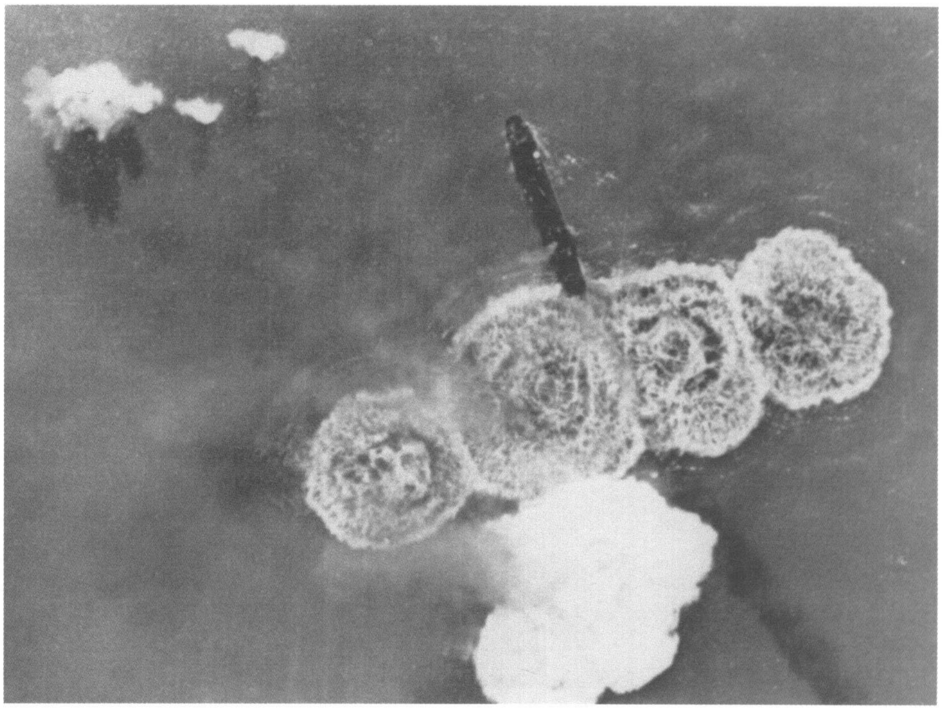
ABOVE: Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor C-1, W.Nr.0005, BS+AJ, was built in 1940 but survived only a few weeks before being destroyed during experiments at the Erprobungsstelle Tarnewitz on 21 March that year. The C-1 featured a faired, fixed upper streamlined, blister which was to be the second of a number of progressive design changes for this defensive position.

BELOW: Another view of Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor C-1, W.Nr.0005, BS+AJ, seen at a different time; note the lack of a top turret gun and the now fitted SC250 bomb shackles outboard of the engines.





THIS PAGE: Believed to be the sinking of the 'Kolskeg' by Junkers Ju 88s of II./KG 51 on 4 July 1940. The burning vessel can be seen in the picture to left from a Beobachter (Observer's) viewpoint through the glazed nose of a Junkers Ju 88.



ABOVE: Heinkel He 111 coded 1H+FS of 8./KG 26 flies in formation over the 'friend' to all bomber pilots – clouds, high above the North Sea in 1940. Hard-pressed pilots under fighter attack frequently saught the protection of clouds as a means of shaking off the pursuer.

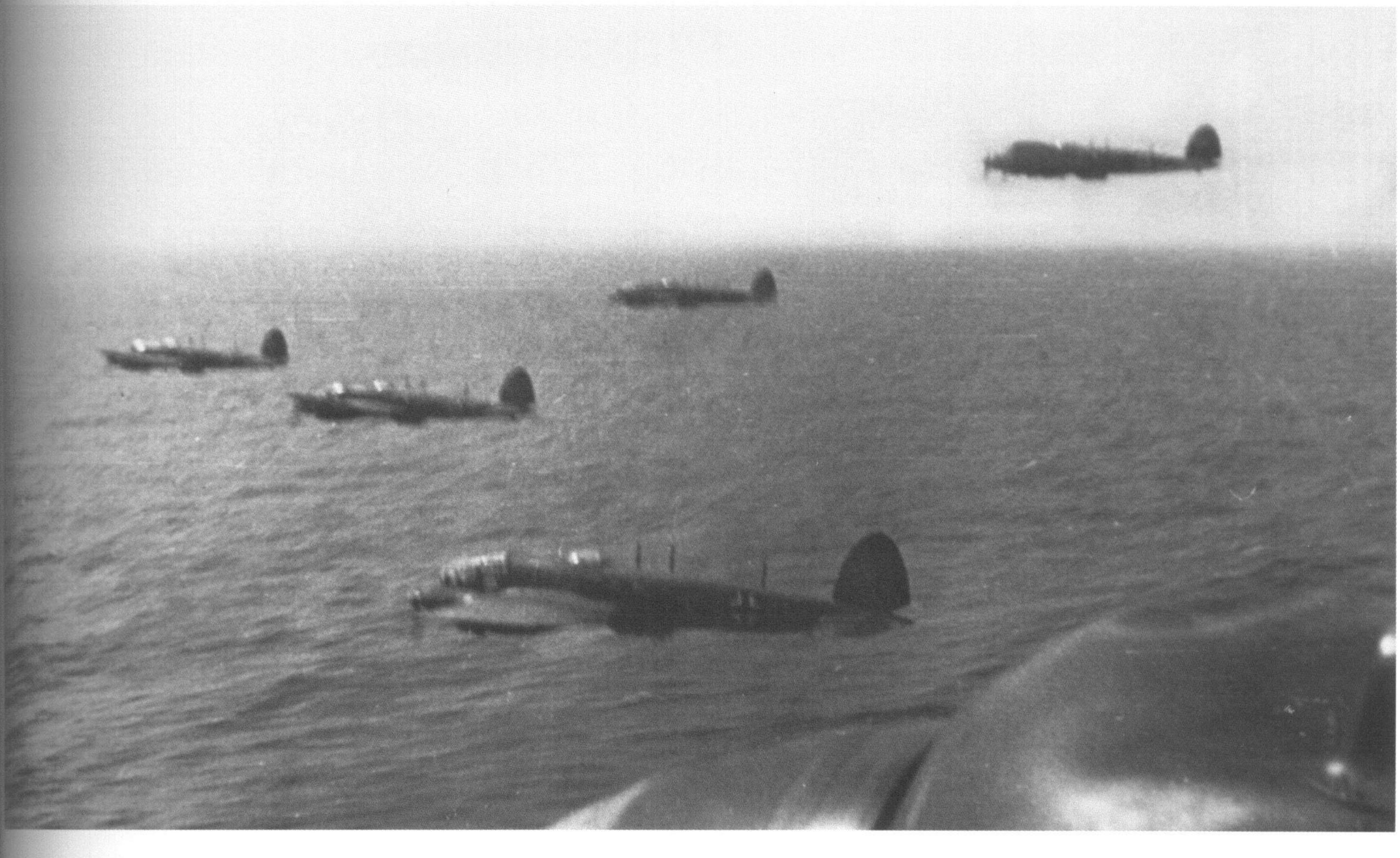
RIGHT: An He 111 of the Löwen Geschwader, KG 26, skims low over the water while the pilot looks back over his shoulder at the camera. The top of the emblem of the I.Gruppe, a black seated lion on a white shield with the motto 'Vestigium Leonis' (footprints of the lion) is plainly visible below the cockpit. From early 1940 onwards, aircraft of KG 26 began to operate against shipping over the North Sea. Note the aircraft is carrying an SC500 bomb slung externally.

The Battle of Britain

The Battle of Britain, which is recognised to have lasted from 10 July to 31 October 1940, was divided into a number of phases, the first of which lasted until 12 August 1940 after which the *Luftwaffe* switched its attention to British airfields and radar stations. That first month saw the German bombers concentrating predominantly on coastal targets and shipping but although mining missions were flown, attacks were predominantly carried out by conventional bombers, as opposed to torpedo bombers, or hitherto much feared Junkers Ju 87 *Stukas*. One *Stuka* pilot, *Oblt* Klaus Ostmann of 8./StG 1, had particularly vivid memories of such anti-shipping missions:

> *"On my first mission on 25 July 1940, the* Gruppe *crossed the Channel. We climbed to 4,500 metres flying height. It is difficult to estimate your own height - very often you think you would plunge into the water when you point down the aircraft only a little bit. Then, in the distance, a dark line appears – the English coast. Now the white cliffs become apparent. Flying over the water has strained the nerves, but now this feeling is intensifying considerably.*
>
> *"Very often we were able to listen to the enemy's radio traffic right down to the last detail which showed us that the enemy's fighter planes had already taken off. We saw them high above us before we attacked. They looked like birds of prey which were waiting to pounce. It was an uneasy feeling. With good reasons our own radio traffic had been kept to essentials during the approach. Our target was a convoy near Portland Bill. I had not seen anything – it is very difficult to discover a ship on the sea – but the formation had already started to dive. After all the tension a feeling of relief comes over you. With determination you go for the target and there is only one effort – to hit the target. One does not notice the* Flak *which shoots by and bursts on both sides. Now I have picked up the target, drop the bombs and by taking wild evasive actions, I follow the formation which is already joining together again. But now our machine gun is hammering and I can see the eight trails of a Spitfire's tracer bullets trying to reach for me again and again like ghostly fingers. A few times you can hear a high crack but the plane's fuselage is wide and if nothing vital has been hit the faithful Junkers can bear a lot of hits like that. I have succeeded in shaking off the last attacking fighter plane and without*

BELOW: A formation of Heinkel He 111s of KGr 100 skimming low over the water of the Skagerrak, head for Oslo for an operation on 8 April 1940.

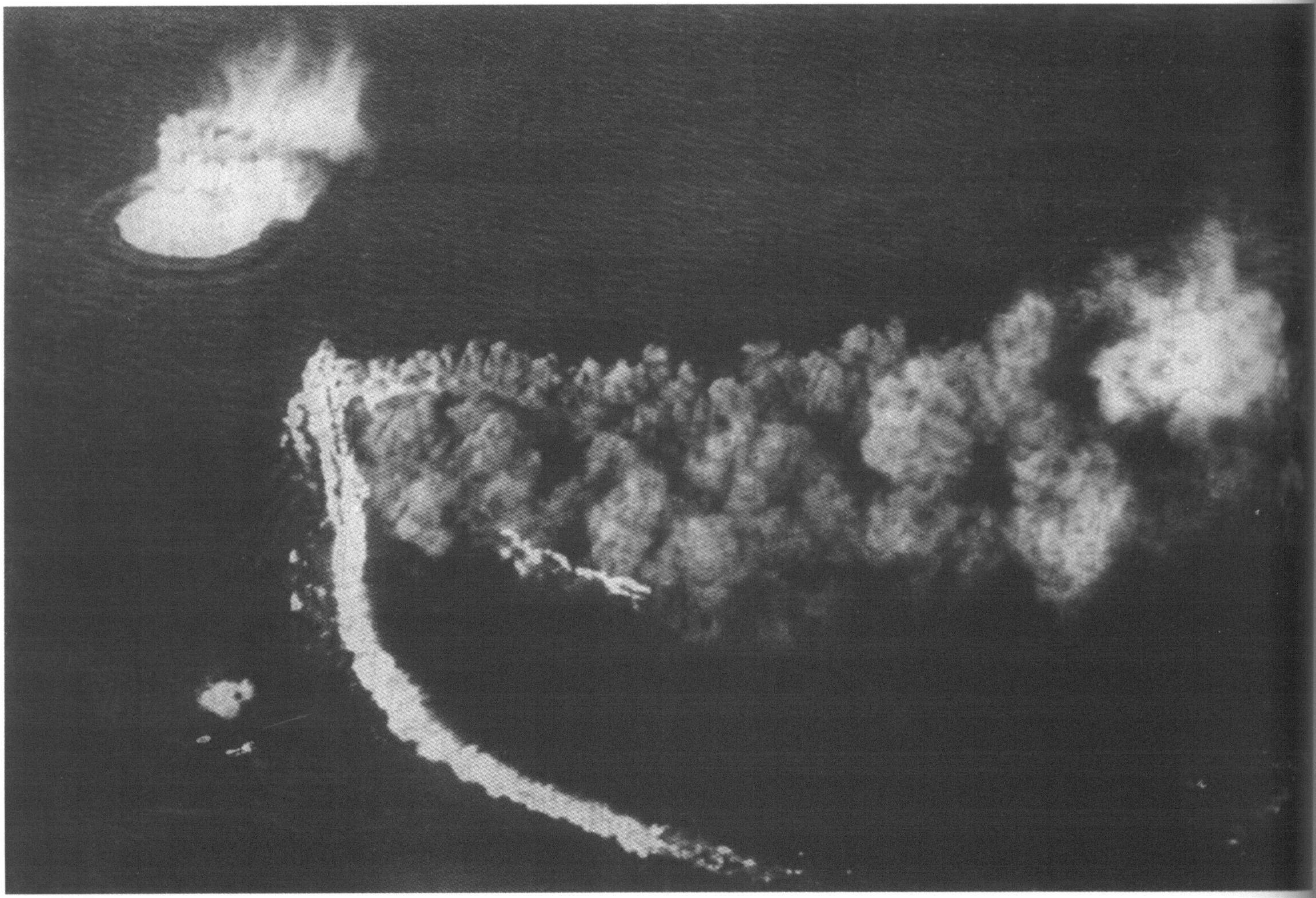


any problems I land on the advanced airfield. All of us had been under heavy fire. The Staffel Kapitän's *aircraft had received a hit in the oil tank and only with great difficulty could he find his way home. Everything was oil-smeared and so he had to make an emergency landing at a small airfield near Cherbourg. I lead the formation back to the airfield.*

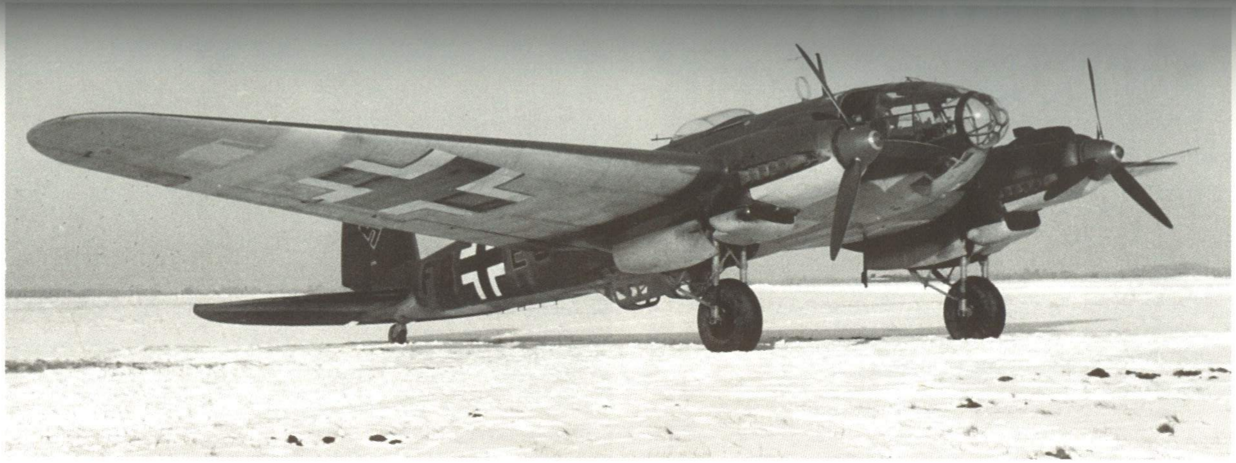
"8 August 1940 – another flight to our advanced airfield has not been in vain. There we are standing by, lying on our deck chairs. On the radio you can hear the popular hit-song 'Auf dem Dach der Welt' *(On the Roof of the World). Even today I can still hear this very catchy tune. Suddenly there is the order for a large-scale mission! We are briefed to attack a well-protected convoy 10 nautical miles south-west of the Isle of Wight.*

"With our limited range the long flight across the water is quite nerve-racking, but the complete Geschwader *is brought into action and the sky is full of* Stukas. *This gives you a reassuring feeling. Now I can see more than on my first sortie. The smoke trails are the characteristic mark of our target, the convoy. We are the last* Staffel *and so our job is the most difficult. We will be longer in the range of fire, we will be the last to fly back and this way a tempting target for the enemy's fighters – the devil takes the hindmost!*

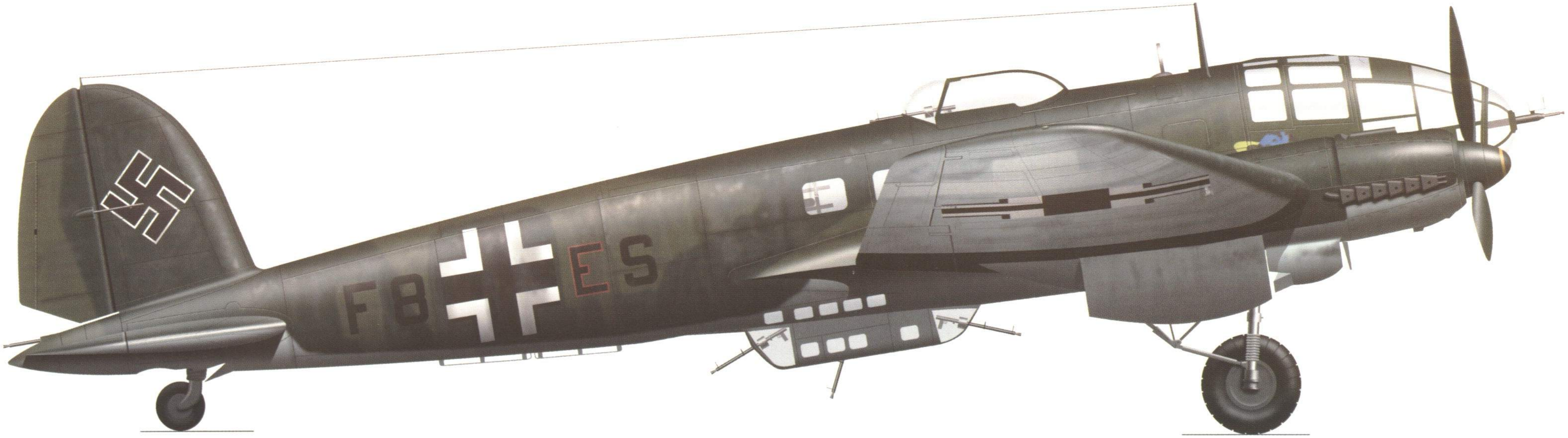
"Now we are over the target. Down we go from high-altitude. The pilot has to correct the bomb run the whole time because the ships are spreading out zigzagging wildly. I think I have stayed over the target too long. However, I have gone too far away from my unit. Flying wild evasive manoeuvres, I am trying to catch up with the formation. There is a big cumulus cloud ahead. I fly into the cloud and think myself safe. But hardly have I left it when again enemy fighters attack from above. They knew that something had to come out of this cloud and so they were able to prepare to pick up the target. There is a loud bang in my aircraft! An indescribable blow hits my right arm and knee. The aircraft nosedives but then I regain consciousness. With my left arm I pull the plane out of the dive only just above the sea-level. Spasmodically a stream of blood comes out of my knee. As good as I can, I tie a tourniquet



BELOW: A propaganda photograph showing an attack on a British warship 20 km south of Portland.



LEFT: III./KG 40 was formed from I./KG 1 at Brest-Lanveoc on 24 March 1941 and retained its He 111 Hs for anti-shipping operations until June 1941 when it was re-equipped with the Fw 200. This Heinkel He 111 carries the code F8+ES with the red individual letter 'E' outlined in red.



Heinkel He 111 H-6 of 8./KG 40, April 1941
Although originally painted in the standard splinter pattern of RLM 70/71 greens with RLM 65 pale blue underneath, this aircraft has been subject considerable overpainting in certain areas. The original black factory code letters under the wings have been overpainted in 65 and the Balkenkreuz is also much larger than the standard size. The aircraft code F8+ES was painted in black with the letter 'E' being outlined in the Staffel colour red. It is possible that the KG 40 badge was painted on the nose, as shown here, with the Gruppe colour yellow being painted in a thin line near the tip of the spinners.

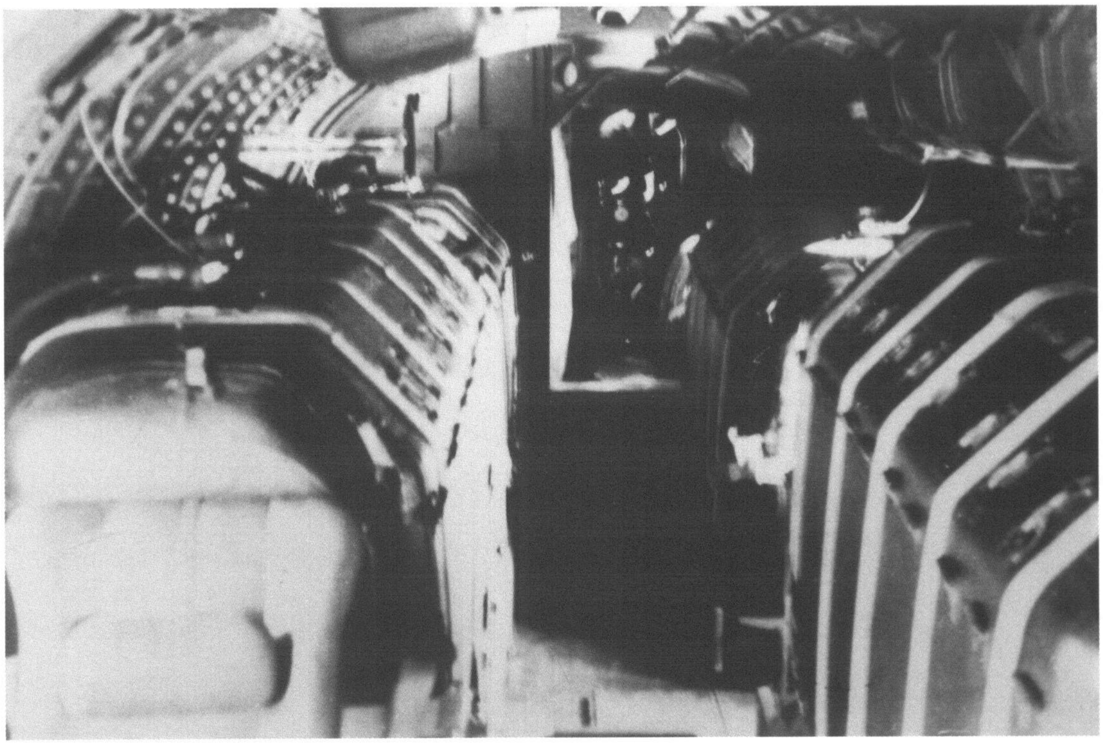
> *on the right leg with the laces of my map board. Now* Oblt *Karl Lion (*Ia III./StG 1*) is flying next to me and encourages me to hold on. The way back takes about 50 minutes – an eternity – I was really in a bad way. But as soon as I can see the French coast all my energies come back. With full speed I approach the airfield. I bring down the plane, it bounces a few times and then goes into a skid to the left. The undercarriage had also been hit. I fell unconscious. Later I woke up. I was on my way to the field hospital at Valognes near Cherbourg."*

Mining missions continued to be carried out under the cover of darkness by Heinkel He 111s and Junkers Ju 88s as well as Heinkel He 115s. The *Luftwaffe* also felt confident to use the Focke-Wulf 200 Condors of I./KG 40 on such missions in addition to the more usual armed reconnaissance. However, despite no credible RAF night fighter defences, the Condor quickly showed itself to be vulnerable. On the night of 20 July 1940, the Condor flown by the *Staffel Kapitän* of 1./KG 40, *Hptm* Roman Steszyn, was shot down by anti-aircraft fire when it strayed too close to Hartlepool while dropping mines whilst four nights later, the *Staffel Kapitän* of 2./KG 40, *Hptm* Volkmar Zenker, was also lost on a similar mission to Belfast harbour as he recalls:

> *"We took off from Lüneberg in northern Germany on 23 July 1940. We refuelled at Brest and there we were loaded with two tons of magnetic mines. Our orders were to drop these in shipping lanes at Belfast Harbour. We only managed to drop three mines before disaster struck.*
>
> *"I had descended from 1,800 metres over the Irish Sea. The engines were idling as I was hoping not to be detected. During the first part of the mission, I was flying at 100 metres, but then I opened the throttles very slowly hoping to go lower and to get rid of the last mine which had become stuck in its holder. I succeeded but by now we were at 15 metres altitude. When I opened the throttles further, the two port engines stopped and the plane banked suddenly. In order to avoid the wingtip hitting the water, I stopped the starboard engines and ditched. The plane had not run out of fuel, but there had been an air blockage in the fuel lines caused by the long glide with idled engines..."*

What happened next became a blur for the pilot, but the *Bordfunker, Uffz* Heinz Höcker now takes up the story:

> *"...because of the impact the aircraft was full of water very soon. In the cockpit I saw my comrades, Wagner and Andreas, in the water looking for an exit. As a result of this I swam to*



RIGHT: An internal photograph of the long-range tanks used by the Fw 200 Condor for its reconnaissance and maritime patrols over the Atlantic. Endurance was around 14 hours, for a range of about 3860 km, or 18 hours if additional fuel tanks were carried instead of bombs, and cruising speeds were around 250km/h. The common bomb load on long-range missions was just four 250 kg bombs.

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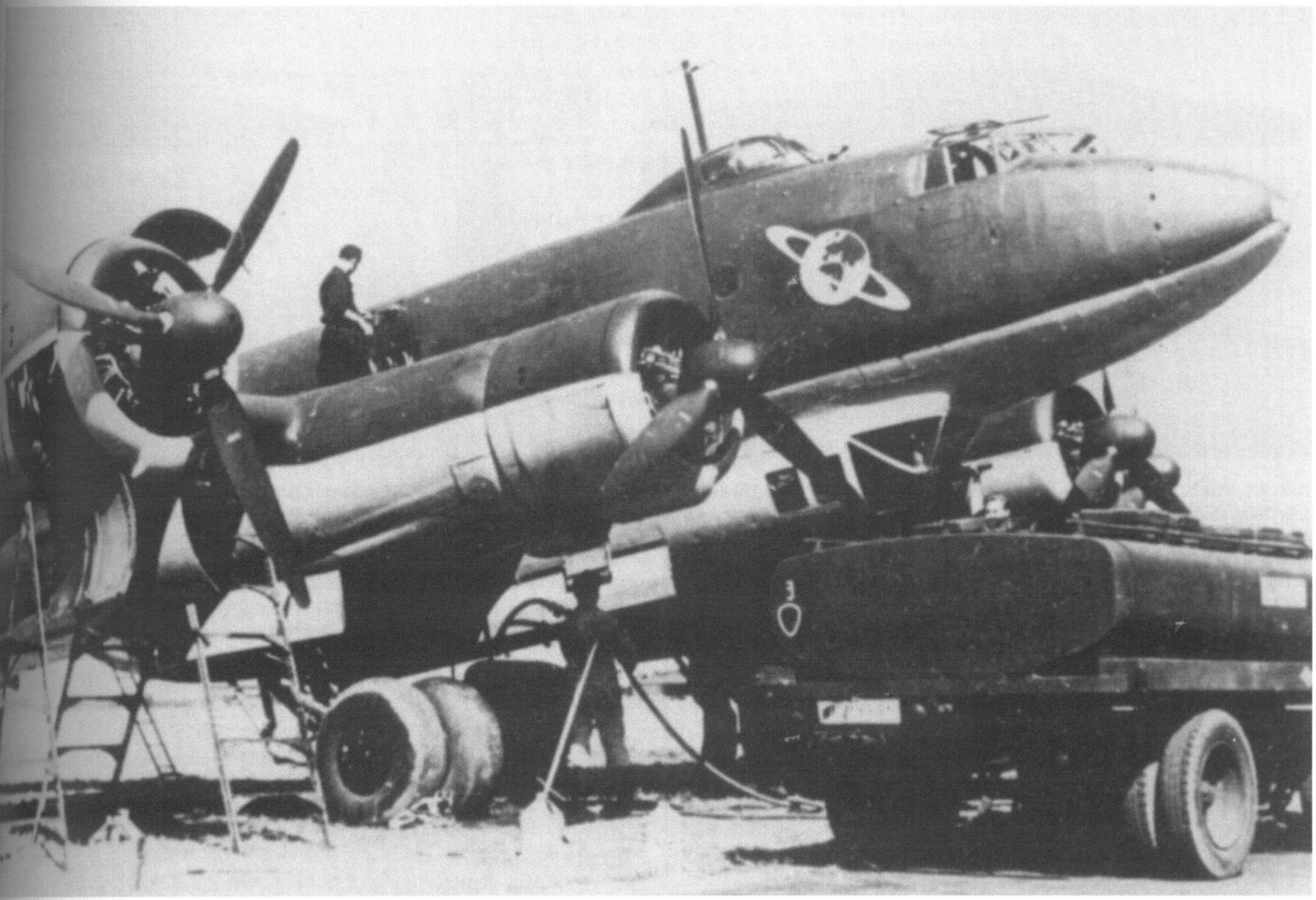
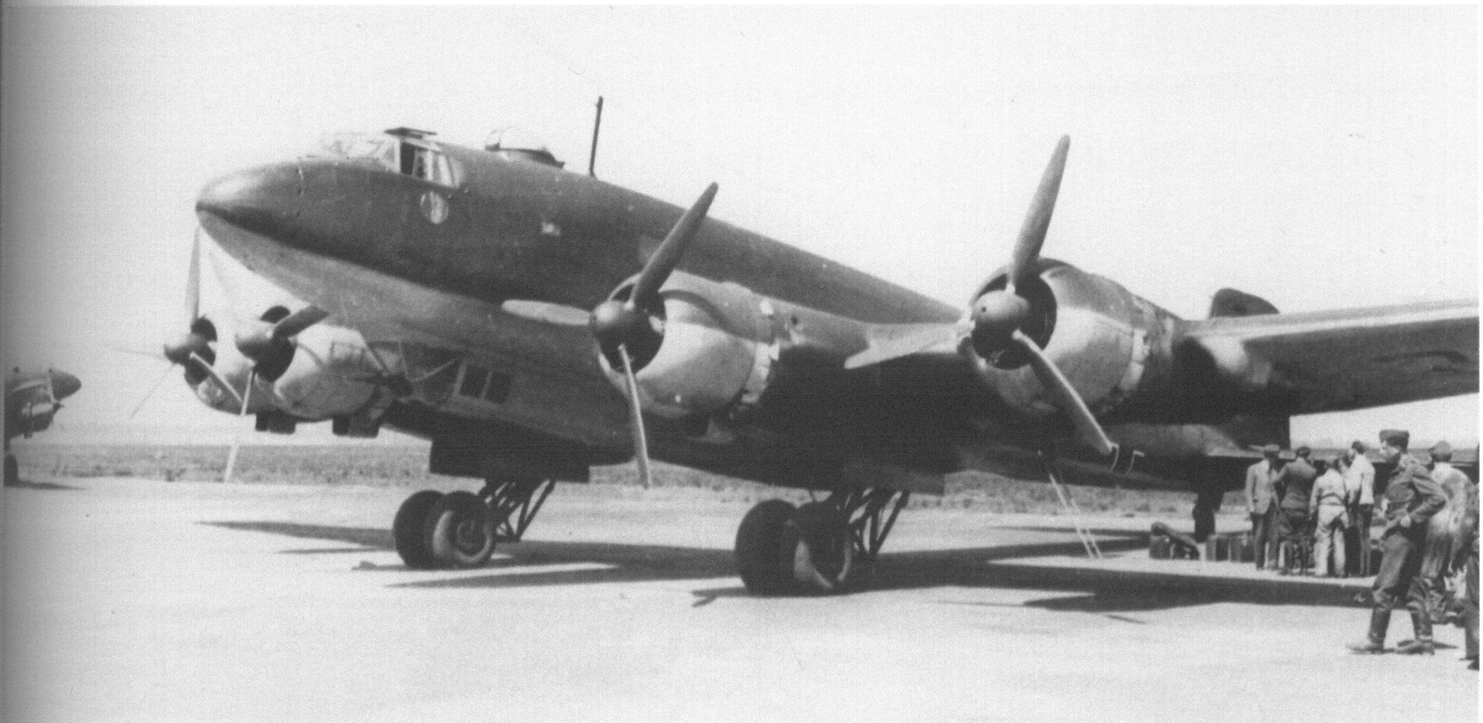
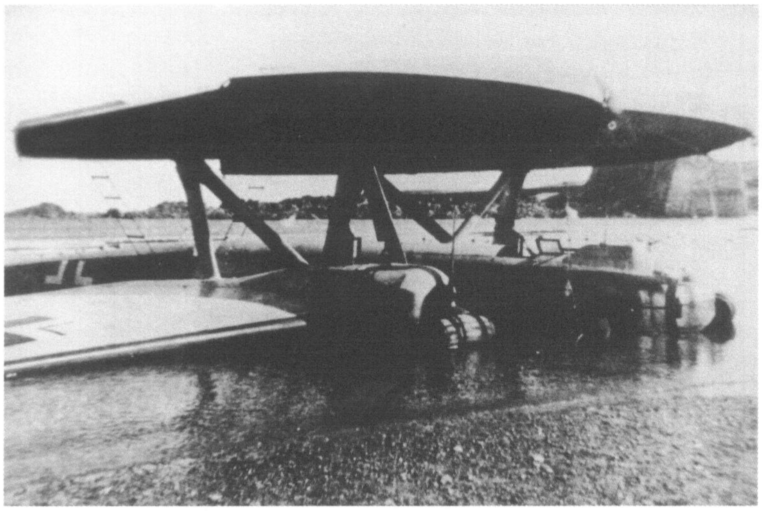
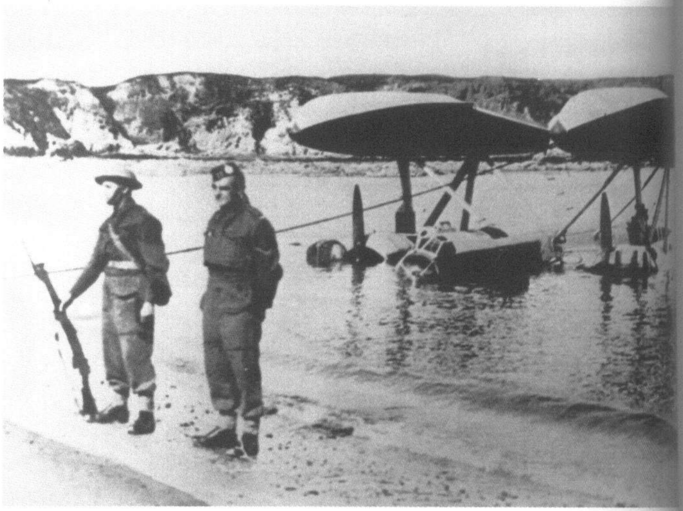


ABOVE: A Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor C-2, of I./KG 40 undergoes engine servicing and refuelling in readiness for another mission over enemy waters.

BELOW: A Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor C-3 of KG 40 on the ramp at Bordeaux-Merignac. Note the absence of the unit's emblem below the cockpit and a great amount of activity at the aircraft's rear.

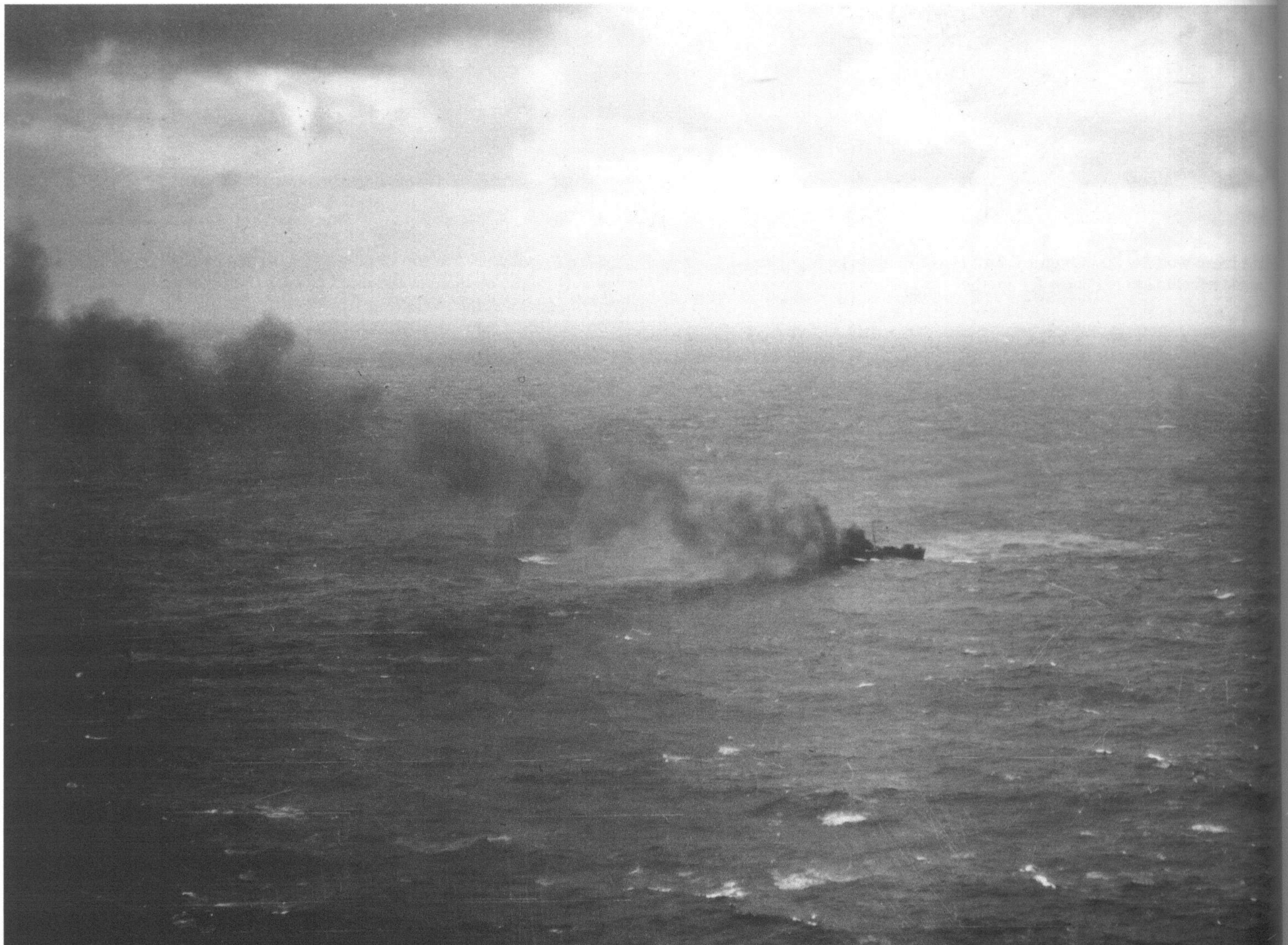






BELOW: The 5,702 tonne merchant ship 'Starstone' lies damaged and burning west of Donegal on 31 October 1940 after being attacked by a lone Fw 200 of I./KG 40 flown by an unidentified Feldwebel.

ABOVE AND ABOVE RIGHT: This Heinkel 115C floatplane from 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 506 was severely damaged by gunfire during a torpedo attack on a convoy on 16 September 1940 off the English coast. Due to the damage was forced to land in the sea seven miles off Alnwick. The crew took to the dinghy and attempted to sink the aircraft by shooting at the floats, but they were only partially successful. The four-man crew were eventually rescued and the aircraft was taken in tow by a fishing boat, which towed it upside down into Eyemouth Harbour north of Berwick-upon-Tweed. As a reward for their efforts the fishing boat crew got the petrol in th tanks and some parachute silk for their wives and girlfriends – a much prized commodity in wartime Britain



> *the other exit in the back of the fuselage, called my comrade Hohmann and told him to get ready the dinghy. I pushed open the aft main door – just now* Hptm *Zenker swam up to us. We left the aircraft. In pitch-dark night I called together my swimming comrades – I only had a distress signal in a tin and the dinghy which had not yet been inflated. For a very long time we called the missing comrades but in my opinion they went down with the Condor.*
>
> *"Swimming in a heavy swell I had to blow up/inflate the dinghy which took me eight hours. Unfortunately the compressed air bottle had not been connected to it after its last servicing before our take-off.* Hptm *Zenker and* Gefr *Hohmann climbed into the dinghy first. We were filled with the desire to get to Ireland as far as this was possible. This plan was frustrated by a storm.*
>
> *"In the morning we noticed a steamship on the horizon which was heading for us. I realized that* Hptm *Zenker had exhausted himself and so I took command: in case of capture we should state that we had been on a reconnaissance flight with a Do 17. Then I searched* Hptm *Zenker's pockets and threw overboard everything which could prove to be suspicious.*
>
> *"The ship which came towards us was manned by English soldiers [sic]. The crew stood on deck with their rifles loaded, the officer had a pistol. We were ordered 'Hands up!' But before I raised my hands I had shot two red flare signals and then threw overboard the pistol and ammunition box. With our hands still raised we had to climb up the Jacob's ladder one after the other. After we had been searched the sailors supplied us with rum. I was thankful about that because I could not take any more. On our way into Belfast harbour, I saw a ship at the bottom of the harbour. When I asked how it had sunk, I was told it had caught fire..."*

What is of interest is the mention that Condors were now operating from bases in occupied France, thus enabling the *Luftwaffe* to operate over the western United Kingdom and Atlantic. On 12 June 1940, it is believed that I./KG 40 moved to Brest in western France and was put under the direct control of *Marinegruppe West*, although administratively it came under *Luftflotte 2.* Furthermore, although X *Fliegerkorps* still remained as part of *Luftflotte* 5, its anti-shipping assets remained as KG 26, KG 30 and Ku.Fl.Gr 506. However, the former two units were increasingly tasked against land targets as the Battle of Britain progressed to such an extent that by the end of the Battle, only II./KG 26 remained in X. *Fliegerkorps.*

9. *Fliegerdivision* had grown from comprising just the Heinkel He 111s of KGr 126 and the Heinkel He 115s of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506 and 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 906. By 13 August 1940, it had transferred most of the Heinkel 115s and gained the whole of KG 4, I./KG 40 and KGr *100.* However, despite being given responsibility for the coastal waters around the United Kingdom, KG 4 became increasingly involved in attacks against mainland Britain whilst KGr 100 assumed the role of a pathfinder unit for attacks on land as opposed to maritime targets. In October 1940, 9. *Fliegerdivision* was re-designated IX. *Fliegerkorps* and expanded from KG 4, KGr 126 and Ku.Fl.Gr 106 to include *Stab*/KG 40 and all but I./KG 30. Despite continuing to carry out infrequent mining operations, most of the *Geschwadern* were tasked to attack mainland targets.

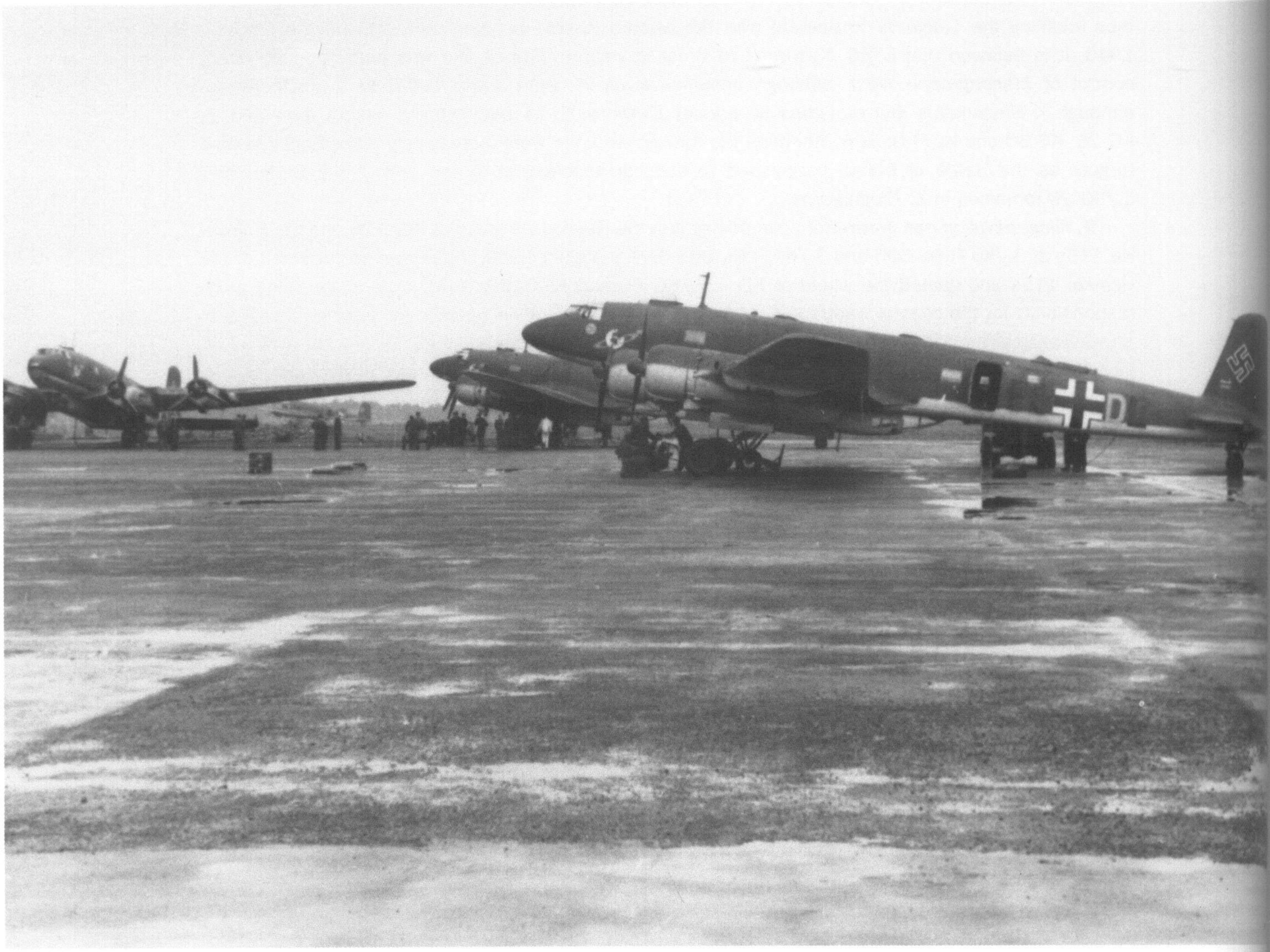
By August 1940, *GenMaj* Hermann Bruch's *Luft West* continued to support the *Kriegsmarine* with a mix of aircraft and units spread between Germany, Norway and France. Again, as the Battle progressed, such units as the Dornier 17-equipped Ku.Fl.Gr 606, operating out of Brest, operated against mainland targets, especially harbours. One of this unit's observers, *LtzS* Werner Techand, explains the role of Ku.Fl.Gr 606:

> *"I was stationed with Ku.Fl.Gr 606 for a short time from 3 October until 18 December 1940. As a Naval officer, I, like many of my fellow officers, had to return to the Navy where we were needed in the submarine service. Our job was that of observers – without exception, we were commanders of the aircraft because of our knowledge of navigation over the sea. However, for most of my time with* Ku.Fl.Gr *606, we were doing the job of Pathfinder for attacks on British towns such as Liverpool, Bristol and London. This meant that we started off at dusk, across the Channel, marking the target with incendiaries for other* Luftwaffe *units. Our navigational equipment in the Dornier 17 Z was inclined to be very primitive, and not forgetting the inexperience of the crew members plus the defences over England, this resulted in a heavy loss of life and aircraft. Another fact to be born in mind was the inaccuracy of the weather forecasting..."*

Another former Ku.Fl.Gr 806, had in October 1939 changed to be a *Kampfgruppe.* It remained part of the *Seefliegerverbände* prior to the Battle of Britain after which it was assigned to IV. *Fliegerkorps,* operating from the west of France. Despite this, the *Gruppe*, commanded by *Hptm* Richard Linke, continued to fly maritime operations during the early part of the Battle as the IV. *Fliegerkorps* report for 11 August 1940 shows:

> *"3 Ju 88 of KGr 806 (take off 1600 hours) to attack a convoy of six ships and two destroyers approximately 20 km west of Holyhead, headed north-east. Success prevented by low cloud. Four Ju 88 of KGr 806 (take off 1458 hours). 1820 hours attacked a medium steamer approximately 70 km east of Cork and at 1906 hours a freighter of 15,000 GRT approximately 20 km west of Lands End with two SC 250 bombs; no success. 3 Ju 88 of KGr. 806 (take off 1813-1817 hours). 2050 hours attacked a freighter of 2-3,000 GRT approximately 100 km west of Lands End with 12 SC 250 bombs. Crews reported ship stopped. Ship probably sunk."*

Torpedo operations were few and far between in the Battle of Britain with *Hptm* Ernst-Wilhelm Bergmann's 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506 being the only torpedo capable unit by July 1940 and with *Hptm* Friedrich-Franz von Schröter's 1./Kü.Fl.Gr. 106 being taken off more conventional armed reconnaissance roles and converted to torpedo operations mid-way through the Battle. However, most if not all torpedo successes were credited to 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506, the first believed to have been on 23 August 1940 when convoy OA 203 was attacked in the Moray Firth, resulting in the sinking of the freighters *Makalla* and *Llanishen* and damaging the *Beacon Grange.* As the attacks increased, albeit slowly, losses began to occur as *Oblt* Clemens Lucas of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506, recalls:



BELOW: Three Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condors of 3./KG 40 are seen being serviced prior to operations on a rather damp and grey day at Bordeaux-Merignac. The aircraft in the foreground coded F8+DL, shows a kill marking on the fin in the shape of a silhouette of a vessel and below that numbers of missions flown, represented by vertical white bars.

> *"On 15 September 1940, we had been briefed to torpedo a tanker (8-10,000 GRT) sailing direction south which had come from Moray Firth, escorted by two small destroyers. The reconnaissance plane had reported a speed of 10 knots.*
>
> *"At about 2300 hours, we saw the tanker north of the Isle of May. Very low, we flew a wide turn and waited until the ship was in front of the Isle of May. Then it turned into the southern entrance; soon the full moon was to be seen in the north-west. In case there was any anti-aircraft fire we attacked in low-level flight. About 500 metres ahead of the target I climbed to 50 metres, aimed at the middle of the ship, using my night sights as well as an angle of allowance, pressed the button at the right of my control column and released the torpedo. Now I had to fly straight on for about 30 seconds so that the slipstream could not turn away the torpedo. The tanker's speed had been about 3-4 knots, not much wake could be seen. The depth of the torpedo was set at six metres. After dropping the torpedo I immediately went down to a flying height of 10 metres. The tanker was hit amidships.*
>
> *"However, the destroyer's pompoms had already fired their first salvos. Both engines were hit and stopped running. However, I was able to land on the sea without any problem, it was 0035 hours on 16 September 1940. Our radio operator fixed a drag anchor to both floats to stabilize the plane. Further away to the south-east the waves were much higher. When two small grey fishing boats appeared at about 0400 hours we scuttled our aircraft. How? After we had set off two incendiaries we took to our dinghy. Ten minutes later the plane sank. The British fishermen took us aboard and we gave them our dinghy as a present. Then they put us ashore at a small fishing port."*

Notwithstanding the losses, October 1940 saw an increase in torpedo attacks against British shipping, the most notable day being 20 October when four Heinkel He 115s led by *Hptm* Franz Dyrchs, the new *Staffelkapitän* of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr. 506, attacked a convoy off the Scottish east coast under the cover of darkness. The seaplanes claimed to have sunk three ships totalling 20,000 GRT, the most successful pilot, *ObltzS* Karl Barth being awarded the *Ritterkreuz* on 14 December 1940 for this and other actions during which he was credited to have sunk 36,000 GRT of shipping. British sources reported that only the steamer *Conakrian* was damaged by airborne torpedoes.

Nevertheless, by the end of the Battle of Britain, the airborne torpedo was still not trusted, and operations generally remained in their infancy simply because of poor technology. Between 1 October and 19 November 1940, 48 torpedo missions had been mounted of which just 15 had resulted in the sinking of 97,000 GRT of shipping. However, as shown by the 20 October 1940 attack, successes appeared to have been over optimistic – British sources acknowledge only four sinkings during the same period, totalling nearly 16,000 GRT. Then, from 26 November 1940 onwards, the *Luftwaffe* placed a restriction on airborne torpedo operations in an attempt to save its paltry stock of 132 torpedoes for special attacks such as against the British Fleet's moorings in the Mediterranean. The *Kriegsmarine* complained and this ban was lifted in early December 1940 by which time poor weather hampered further attacks, just one being recorded before the end of the month.

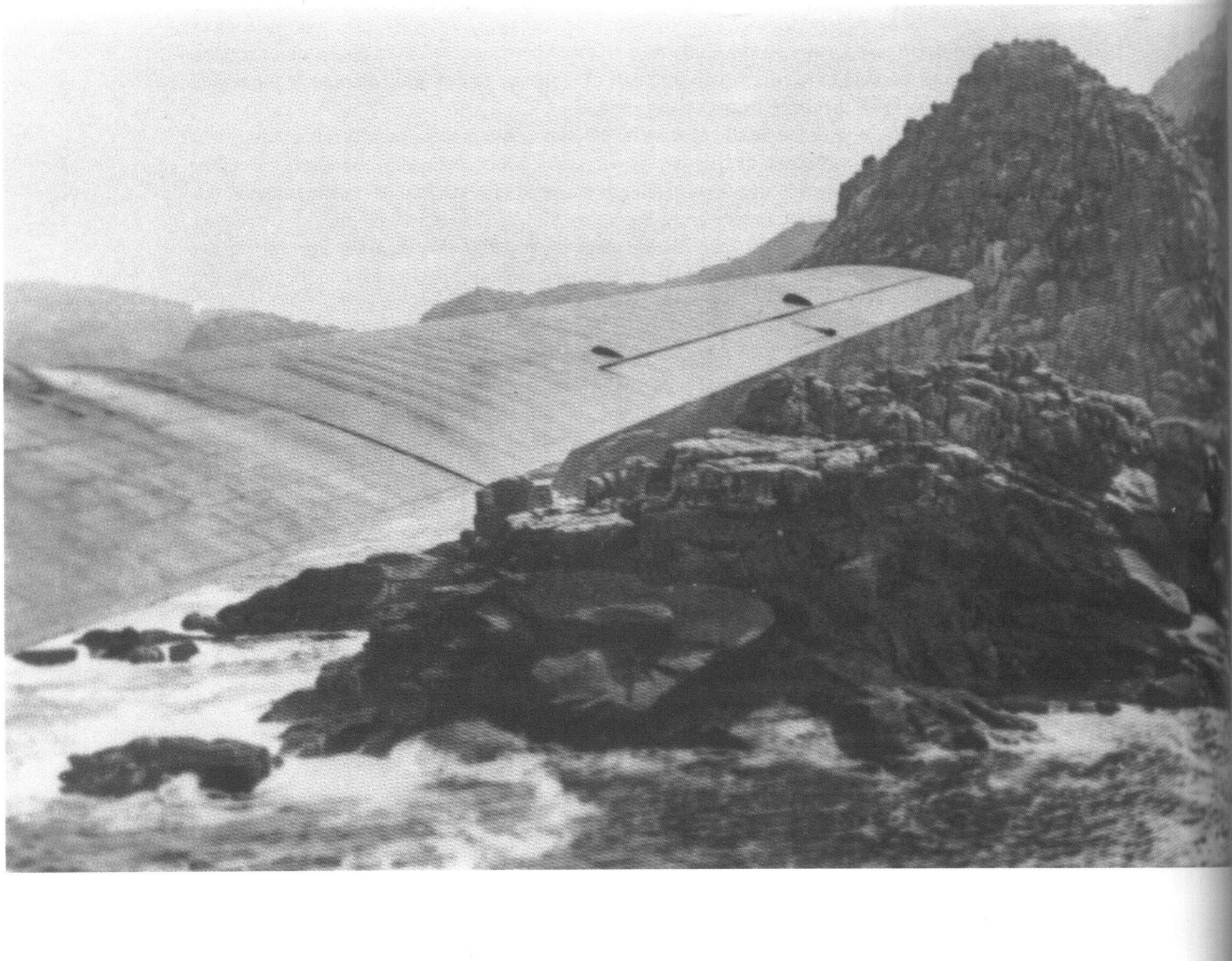
Towards the end of the Battle of Britain, it was decided to designate a single Heinkel 111 *Staffel* for experimental torpedo operations and it would appear that this task was given to *Hptm* Dr Roman Auernig's 1./KGr 126. As part of IX. *Fliegerkorps*, KGr 126, re-designated I./KG 28 in December 1940, had continued to carry out mining operations before switching to attacks on mainland Britain. However, in November 1940, three crews commanded by *Oblt* Helmut Lorenz, *Oblt* Josef Saumweber and *Oblt* Friedrich Müller, began to carry out experimental torpedo missions flying from Nantes in north-western France. Evidence of this comes from the loss report of what was termed a 'Heinkel 111 H-4 *Torpedo-Flugzeug*' on a '*Luft Torpedo*' mission on 9 November 1940. No record of any attack that day has been confirmed but the bomber, commanded by *Oblt* Helmut Lorenz of 1./KGr 126, was shot down into the sea off Brest by what the survivors describe as a 'Lockheed Hudson'. This matches with the combat between a Bristol Blenheim of 236 Squadron captained by Plt Off Dugald Lumsden off Brest at 1316 hours. It is interesting to note that this proves the *Luftwaffe* was now attacking shipping to the south and west of the United Kingdom, as opposed to attacks by Heinkel 115s in the North Sea, and that it almost resulted in the loss of one of the early exponents of Heinkel 111 torpedo operations who, by the end of 1940, had been credited with sinking a 5,000 GRT steamer in the English Channel.

Away from the arguments for and against aerial torpedo attacks, there was one more conventional unit with a less than conventional aircraft which, as the Battle of Britain progressed, was meeting with a high degree of success. Firmly established on the south-western French airfield of Bordeaux-Merignac, far away, for the moment, from the attentions of the RAF, *Maj* Edgar Petersen's I./KG 40 were able to fly armed-reconnaissance missions with the Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor as far west as 24 degees West with little fear of being shot down, preying on undefended merchant ships and at the same time keeping the *Kriegsmarine* happy by acting as its eyes and ears. By 31 December 1940 the *Gruppe* had been credited with sinking in the region of 800,000 GRT of shipping for the loss of just two Condors – on 20 August 1940, *Oblt* Kurt-Heinrich Mollenhauer and his crew were forced to land in Eire when damaged by *Flak* from the ship they were attacking and on 22 October 1940, *Oblt* Theodor Schuldt and his crew went missing during a weather reconnaissance of the Irish Sea.

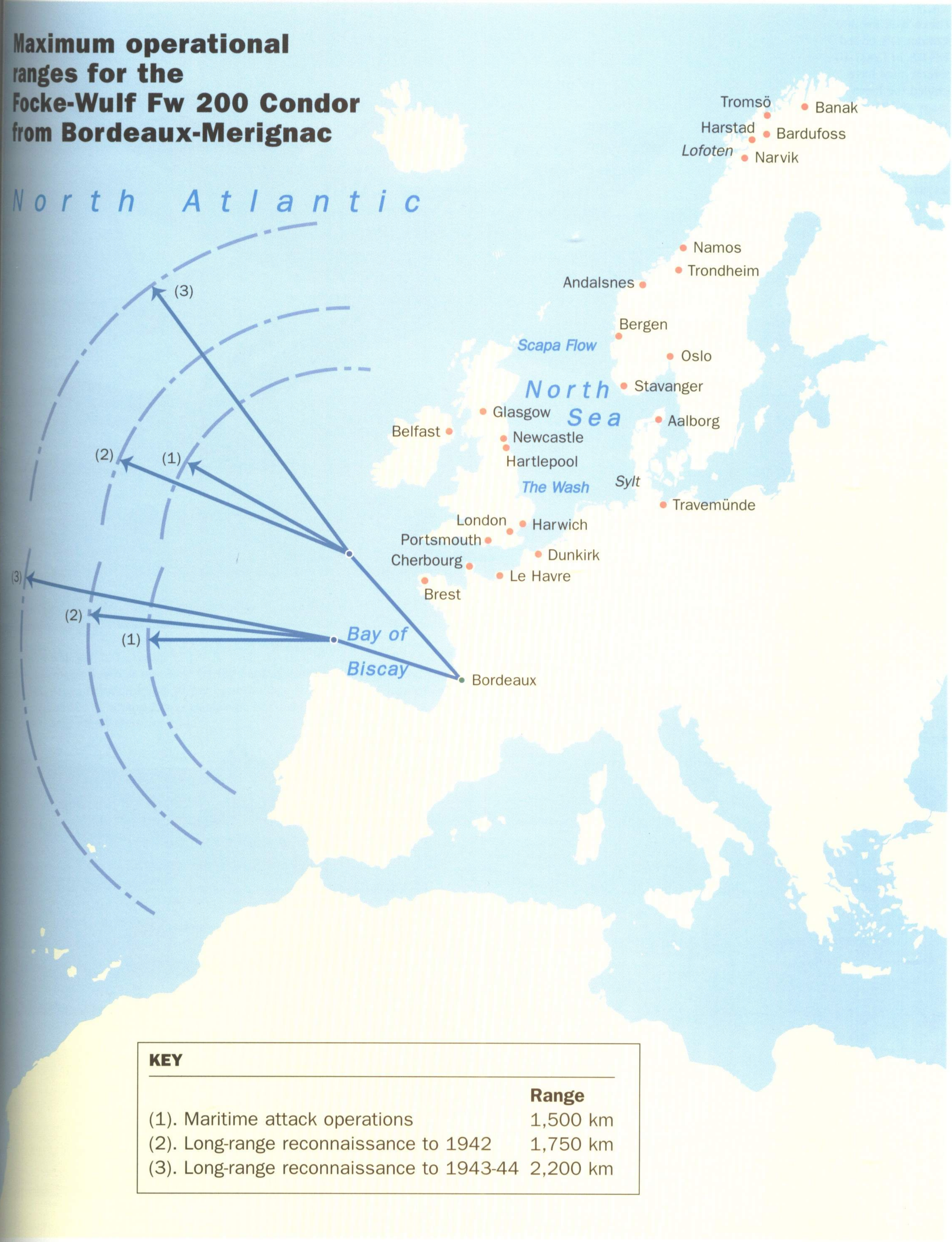
The Condor crews were able to attack the predominantly undefended ships from very low level, normally dropping just four 250 kg bombs which would hit either just above or just below the waterline. Using this technique, the most notable sinking occurred on 26 October 1940 when *Oblt* Bernhard Jope of 2./KG 40 discovered the 42,348 GRT steam passenger ship *Empress of Britain* returning to Liverpool from Capetown. When she was 70 miles north-west of Ara Island, County Donegal, Jope, attacking from low-level hit the ship with just two 250 kg bombs. Most of the 416 crew, two gunners and 205 passengers abandoned ship leaving a skeleton crew to try and get the liner home. However, two days later, she was sunk by *ObltzS* Hans Jenisch's U-32 north-west of Bloody Foreland with the loss of 25 crew and 20 passengers.

The Condor and its crews had already made a name for themselves. By early 1941, I./KG 40 had already five *Ritterkreuzträger*. Its *Gruppen Kommandeur, Maj* Edgar Petersen was quickly awarded the coveted decoration as well as *Hptm* Edmund Daser (*Staffel Kapitän* 1./KG 40), *Hptm* Fritz Fliegel (*Staffel Kapitän* 2./KG 40), *Oblt* Hans Buchholz (1./KG 40) and *Oblt* Bernhard Jope (2./KG 40). Many more would achieve this accolade as the maritime war intensified and as Germany's fortunes, despite the setback of the Battle of Britain, continued, it looked as if 1941 promised to be a good year for the *Luftwaffe's* maritime air war.

BELOW: The vi
from the starbo
side window of
Fw 200 Condor
it transits low a
fast along the
Spanish coast.



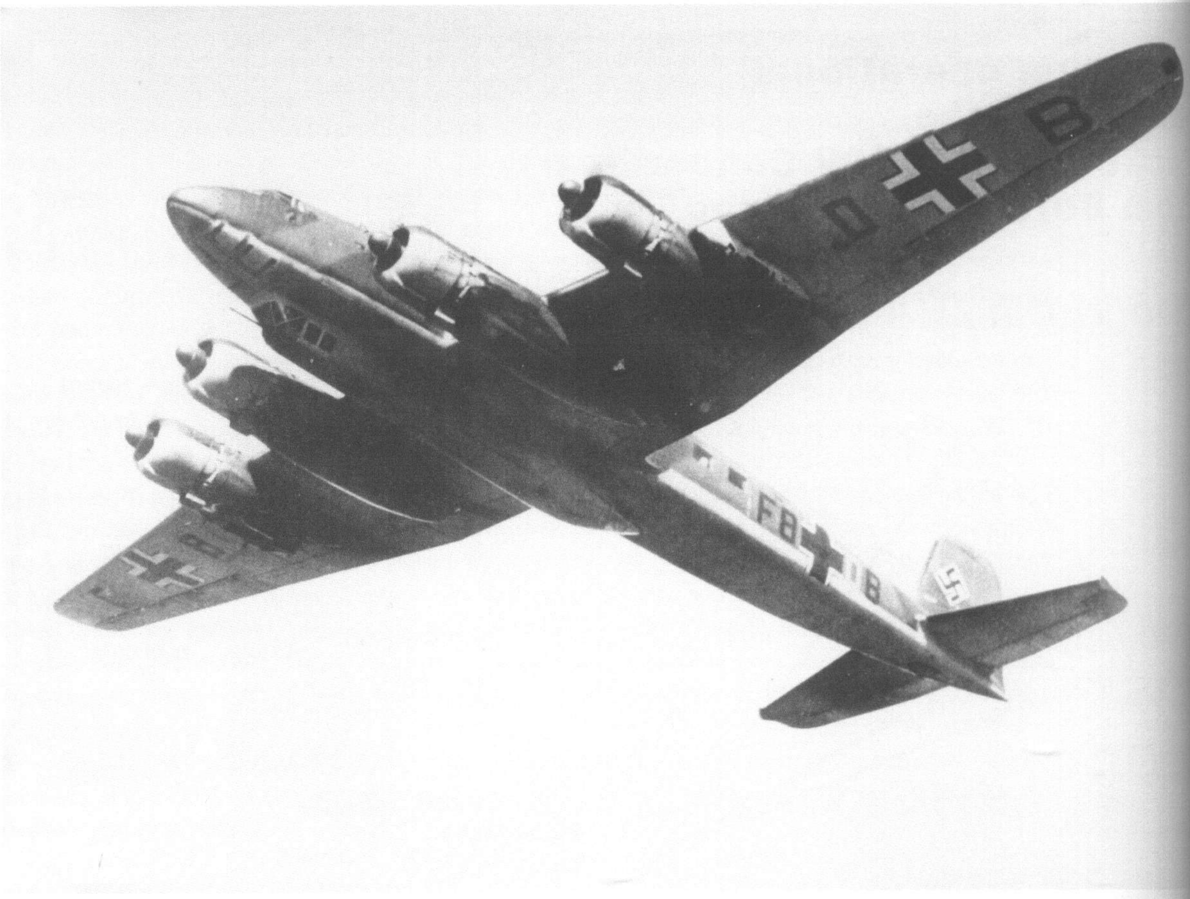
Maximum operational ranges for the Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor from Bordeaux-Merignac


North Atlantic
(3)
(2)
(1)
(3)
(2)
(1)
Bay of Biscay
Bordeaux
Tromsö
Banak
Harstad
Bardufoss
Lofoten
Narvik
Namos
Trondheim
Andalsnes
Bergen
Scapa Flow
Oslo
North Sea
Stavanger
Glasgow
Aalborg
Belfast
Newcastle
Hartlepool
The Wash
Sylt
Travemünde
London
Harwich
Portsmouth
Dunkirk
Cherbourg
Le Havre
Brest

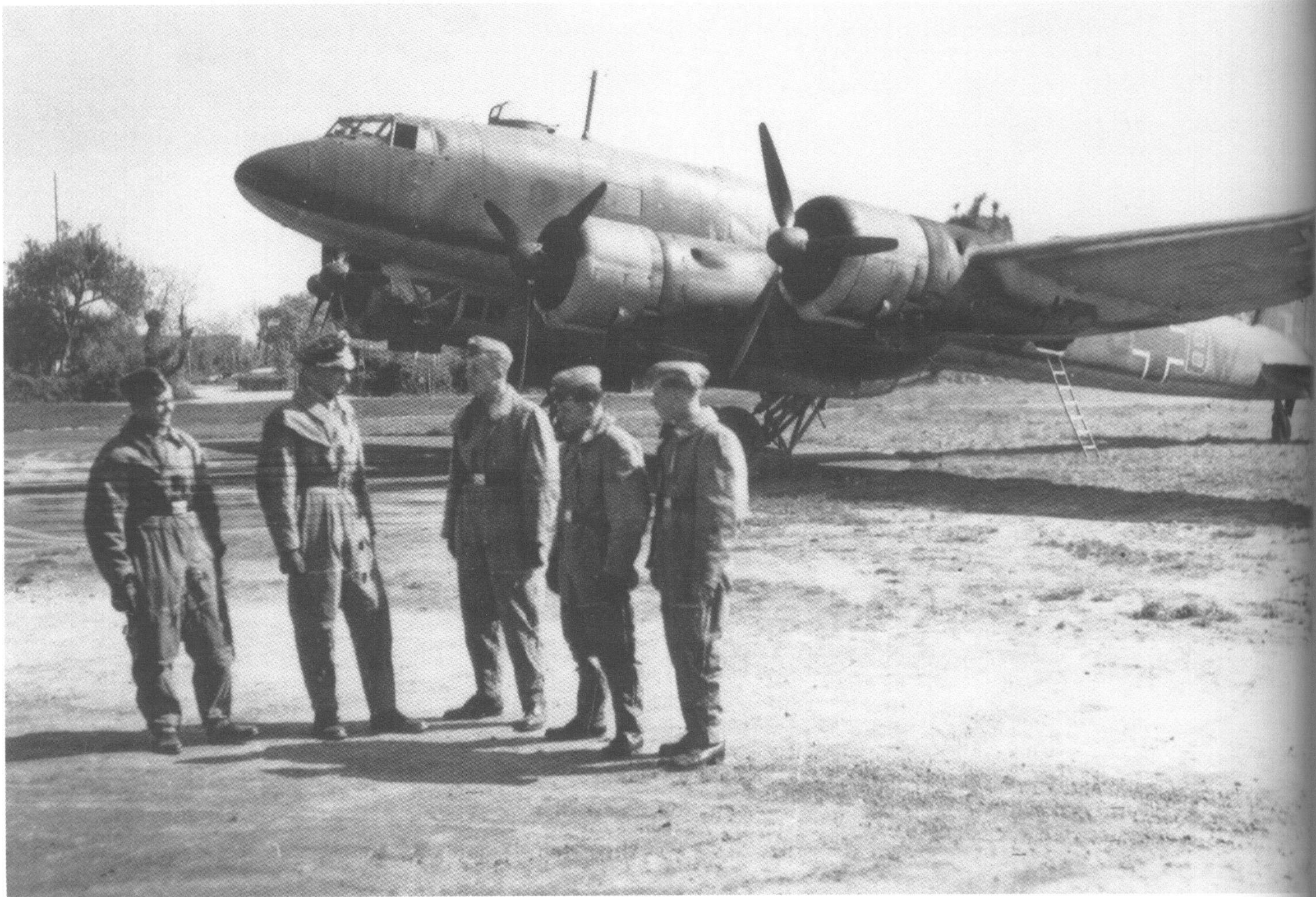
KEY

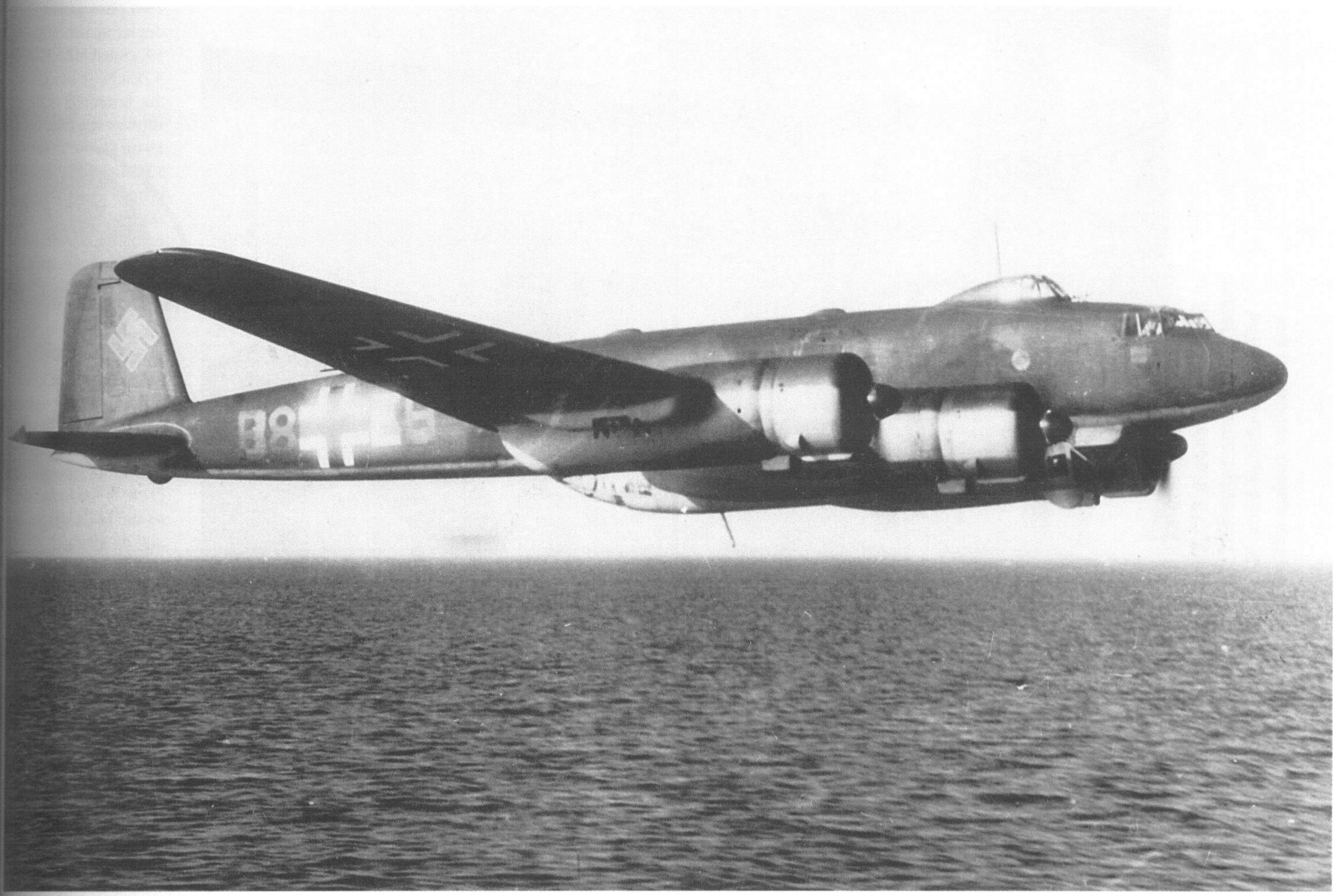
	Range
(1). Maritime attack operations	1,500 km
(2). Long-range reconnaissance to 1942	1,750 km
(3). Long-range reconnaissance to 1943-44	2,200 km

RIGHT: A view of the Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor C-3, coded F8+DB, of I./KG 40 which must have chilled the heart of many an Allied seaman who saw this view, roars overhead. The aircraft shows pronounced wear from its maritime role. Note the heavy exhaust staining and panel lines under the fuselage nose which have been repainted in a primer finish.



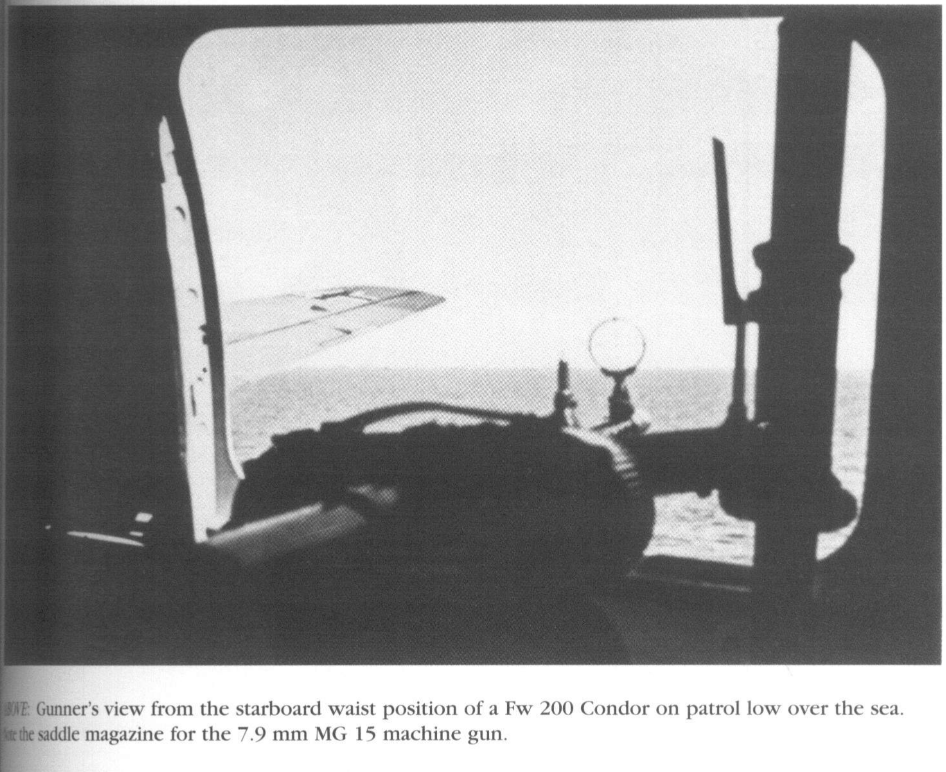
BELOW: Like most Luftwaffe units KG 40 had its own separate Gruppe dedicated to the training and conversion of crews, IV. (Erg)/KG 40. The crew in front of this Fw 200 Condor, coded F8+BW, are in the process of converting from the He 111.



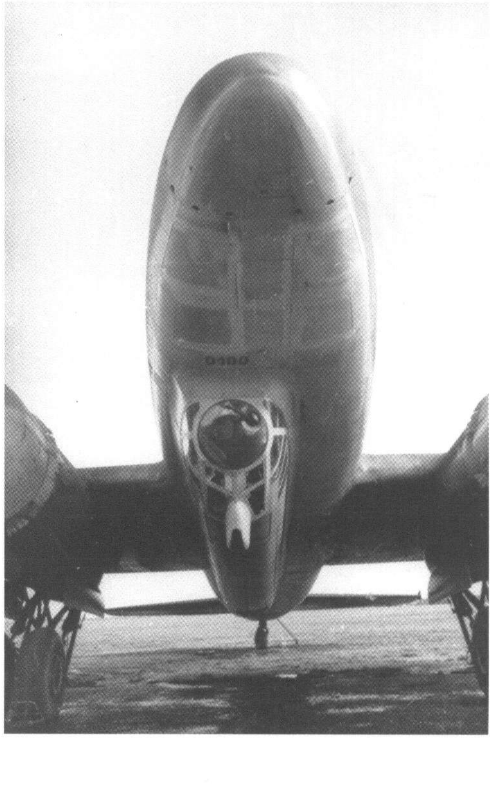


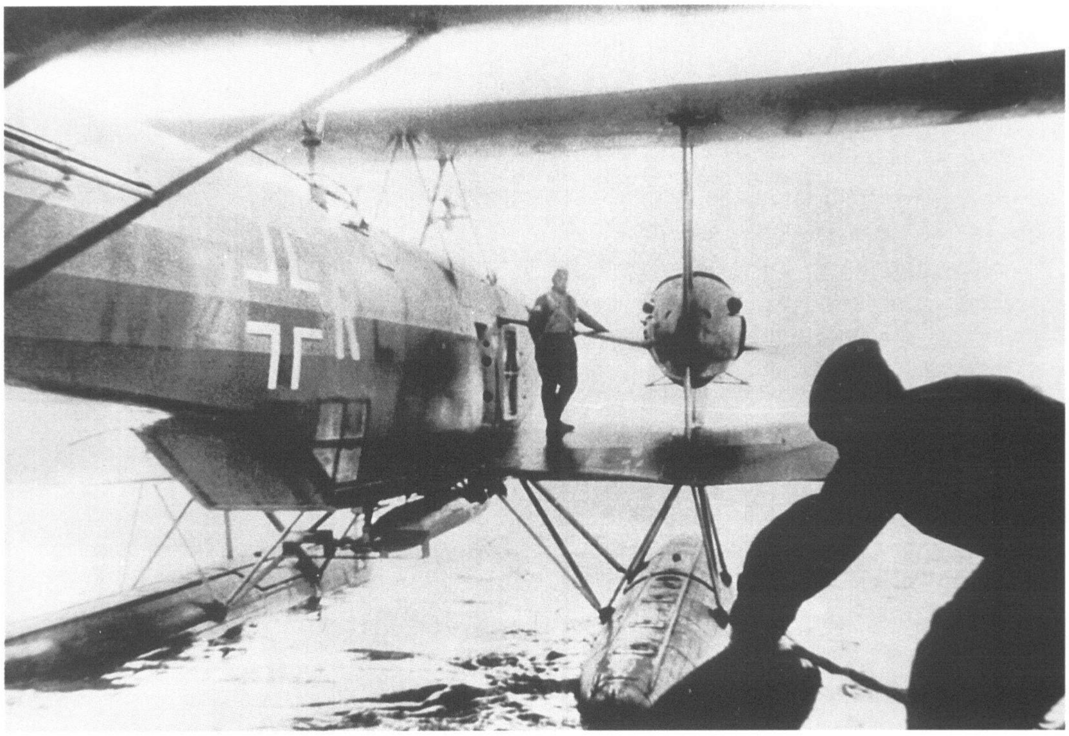
BOVE: Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor C-2, W.Nr.0023, F8+EH, is elieved to have been flown at one time by the Staffelkapitan 1/KG 40. However it succumbed 30 per cent damage at est on 21 September 1940 and it was destroyed in Germany st over a year later on 21 October 1941.

BELOW RIGHT: Though a C-4 variant seen in 1942, this view of the underside of the fuselage and the ventral gondola of Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor coded KE+IY later F8+CS of 8./KG 40 nevertheless gives an excellent impression of how the ground crews had to repaint the panel joints of the aircraft in new pale blue paint due to wear caused by exposure to the elements. Note the W.Nr. 0100 is painted in black forward of the gondola and the Lotfe bombsite housing is clearly visible. This aircraft subsequently suffered 50 per cent damage in an accident on 9 November 1940.

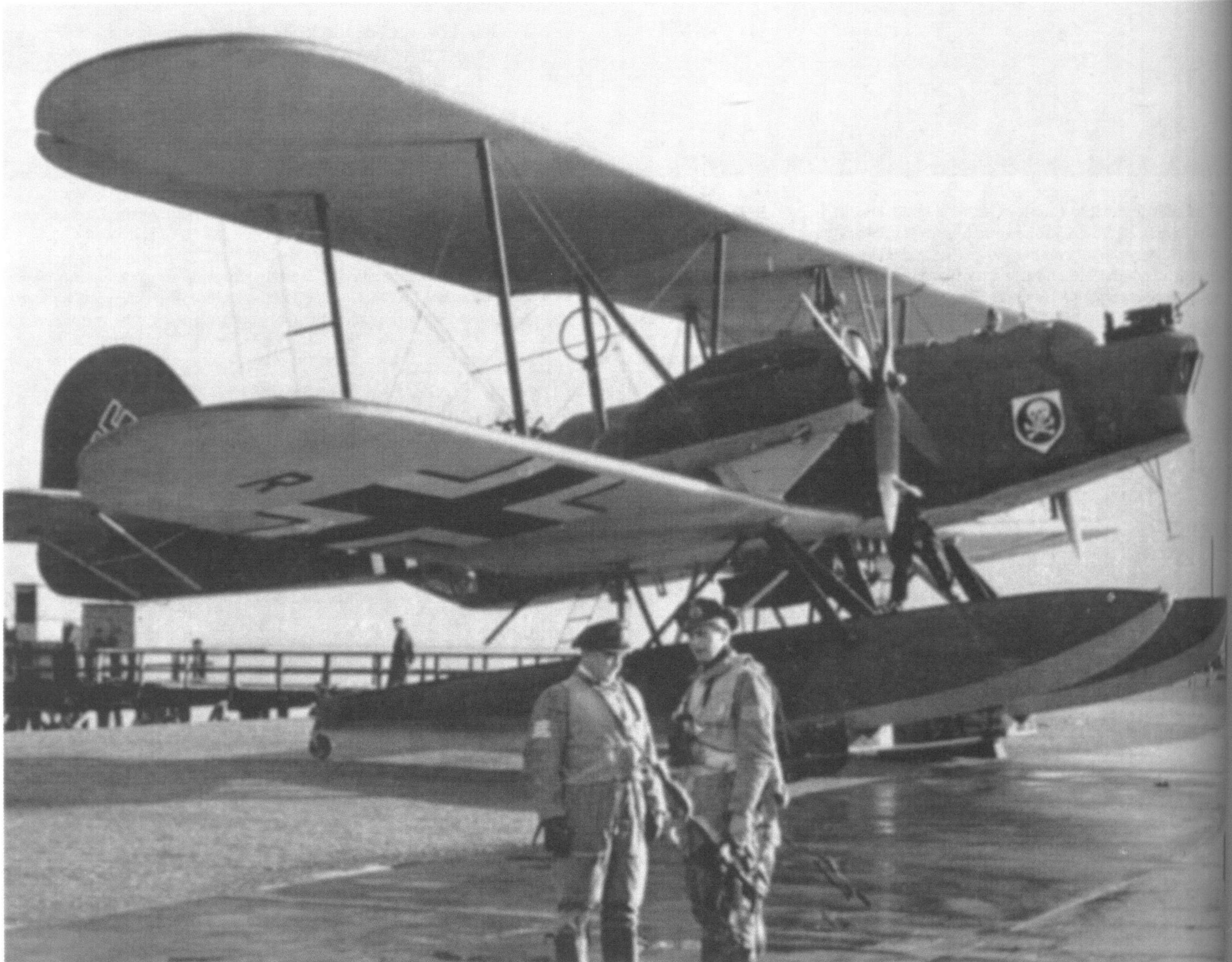


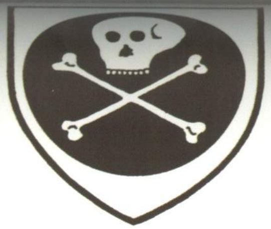
BOVE: Gunner's view from the starboard waist position of a Fw 200 Condor on patrol low over the sea. te the saddle magazine for the 7.9 mm MG 15 machine gun.



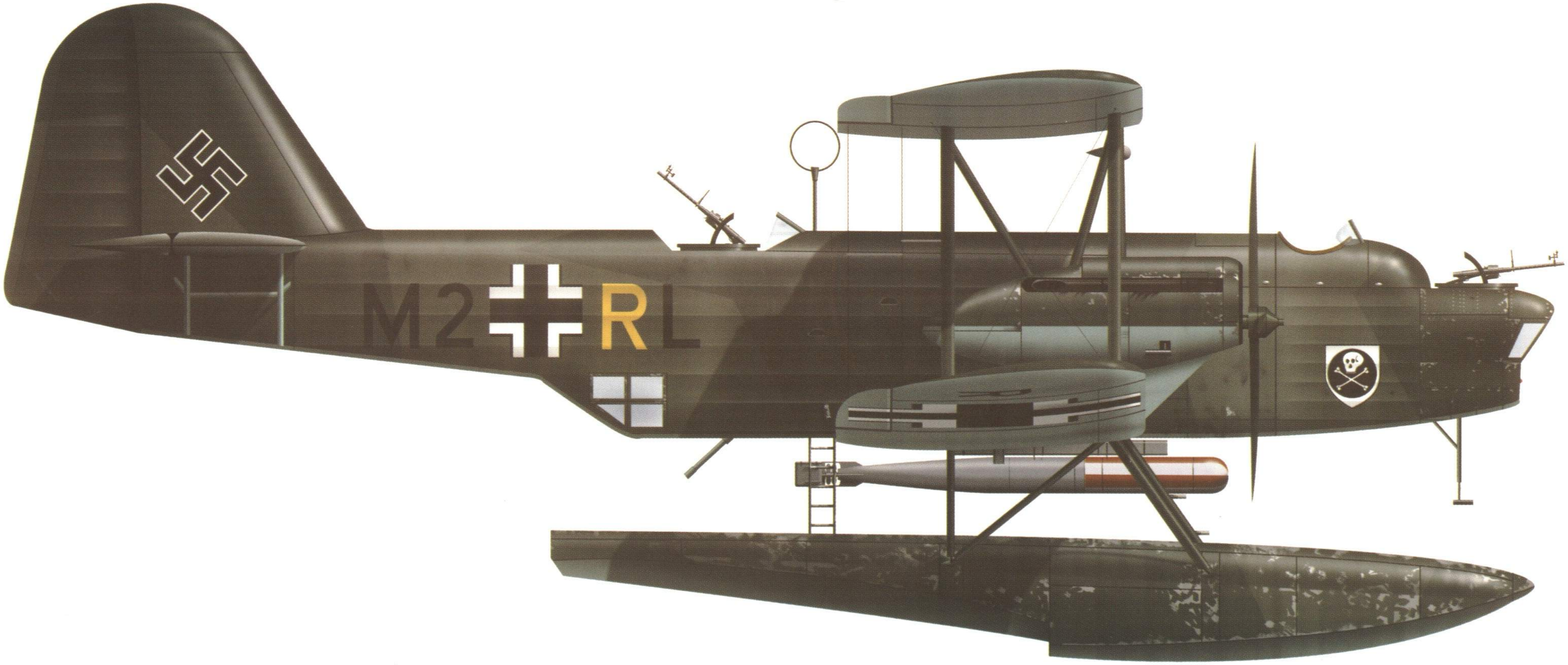


Two photographs depicting the Heinkel H 59, coded M2 + RL, of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 106 both on the water and on the slipway at a Baltic base i 1940/41. The aircraft we a standard RLM 72/73/6 scheme and also carries t skull and crossbones emblem of 3.Staffel whic had been inherited from 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 206. in Octo 1939. The open nose do position is armed with a single 7.9 mm MG 15 machine gun on a ring mounting and a similar weapon would have arme the rear gunner's cockpit and ventral gondola. The crew in the foreground a to the left, a Hauptmann and to the right, an Oberleutnant. Both wear K So/34 one piece flying suits and Schwimmweste and appear to wear earl naval style caps.



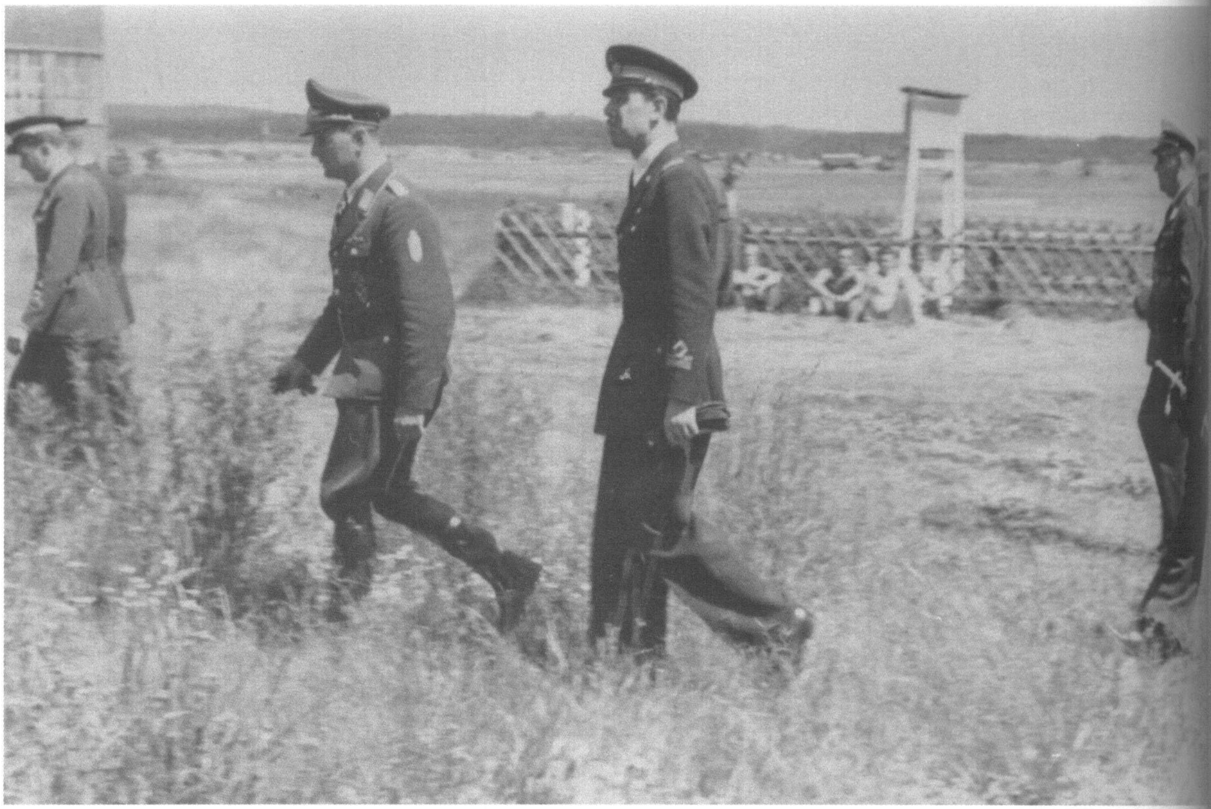


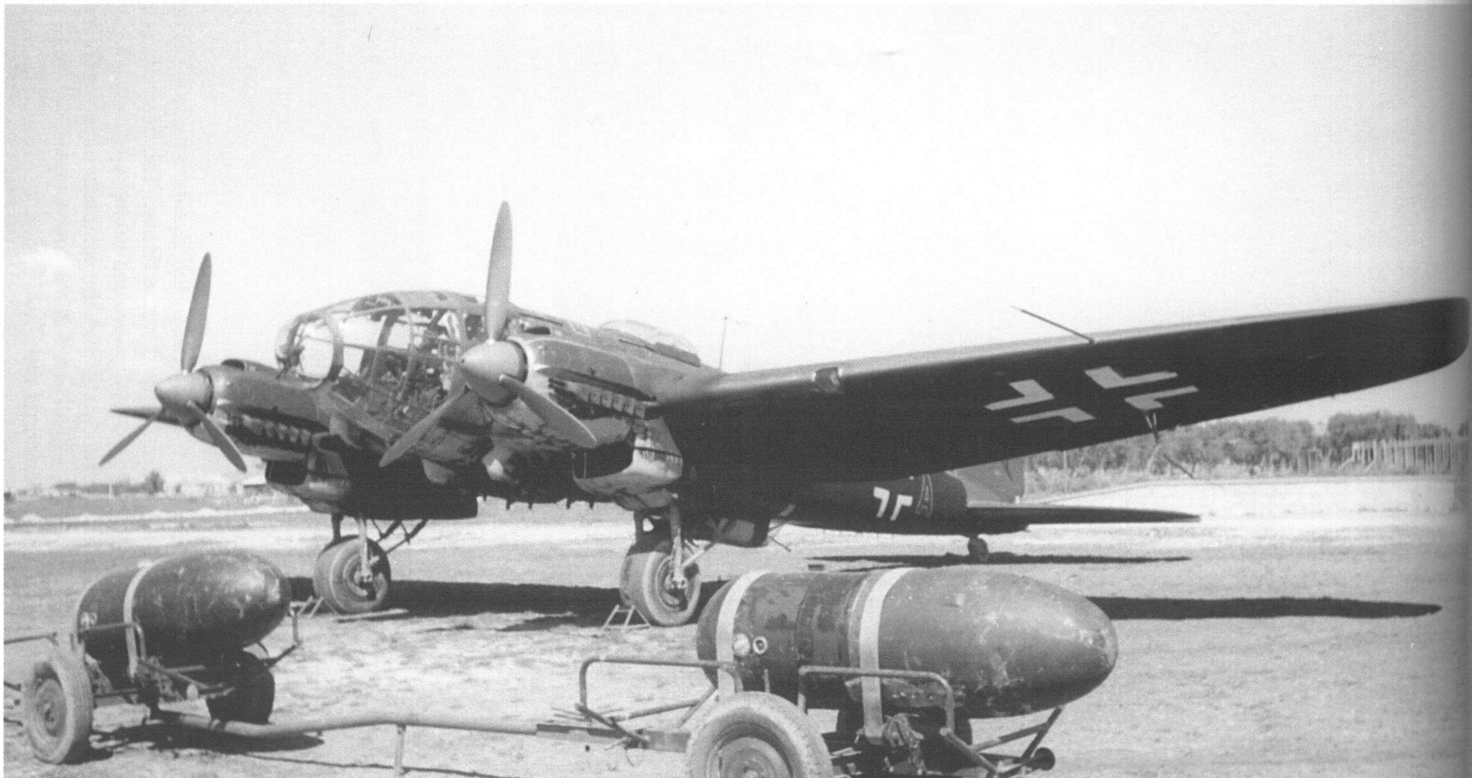
Emblem of
3./Kü.Fl.Gr 406



Heinkel He 59 B-2, M2+RL, of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 406
This aircraft carries the unit code M2+RL and is painted in the standard factory splinter pattern of RLM 72/73 dark greens on the upper surfaces with RLM 65 pale blue underneath extending to the floats. The demarcation line separating the 72/73 greens from the 65 is sharply defined. The Balkenkreuz on the underside is oversized taking up almost the full width of the wing. The outer arms of the letter 'M' of the unit code are sloped which might indicate that the template used for the letter was the letter 'W' used upside down. The individual aircraft letter 'R' is painted in black outboard of the cross under the wing, but appears in the Staffel colour yellow on the fuselage. The buffer tips to the floats are coloured red.

RIGHT: Bruno Mussolini, son of Benito Mussolini, the Italian leader, visits KG 40 at Bordeaux-Merignac. To Mussolini's right is Ritterkreuz holder, Hauptmann Edmund Daser, Staffelkapitän of 1./KG 40.

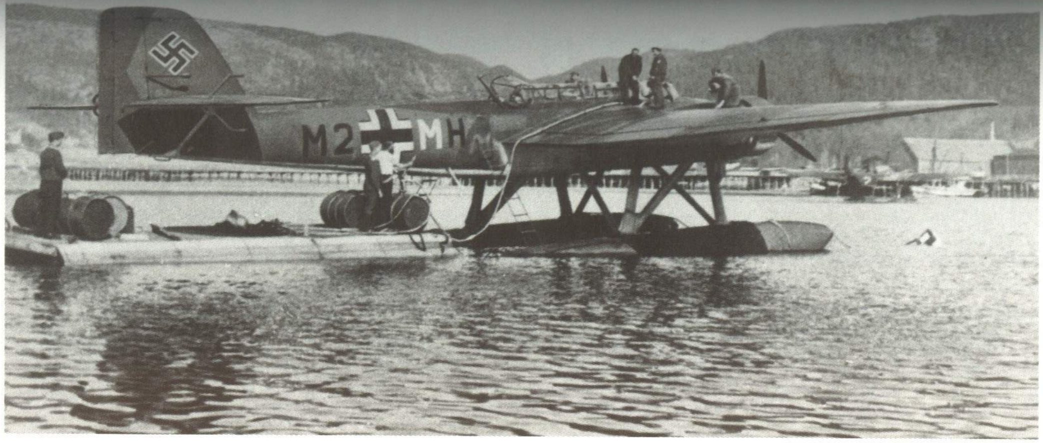


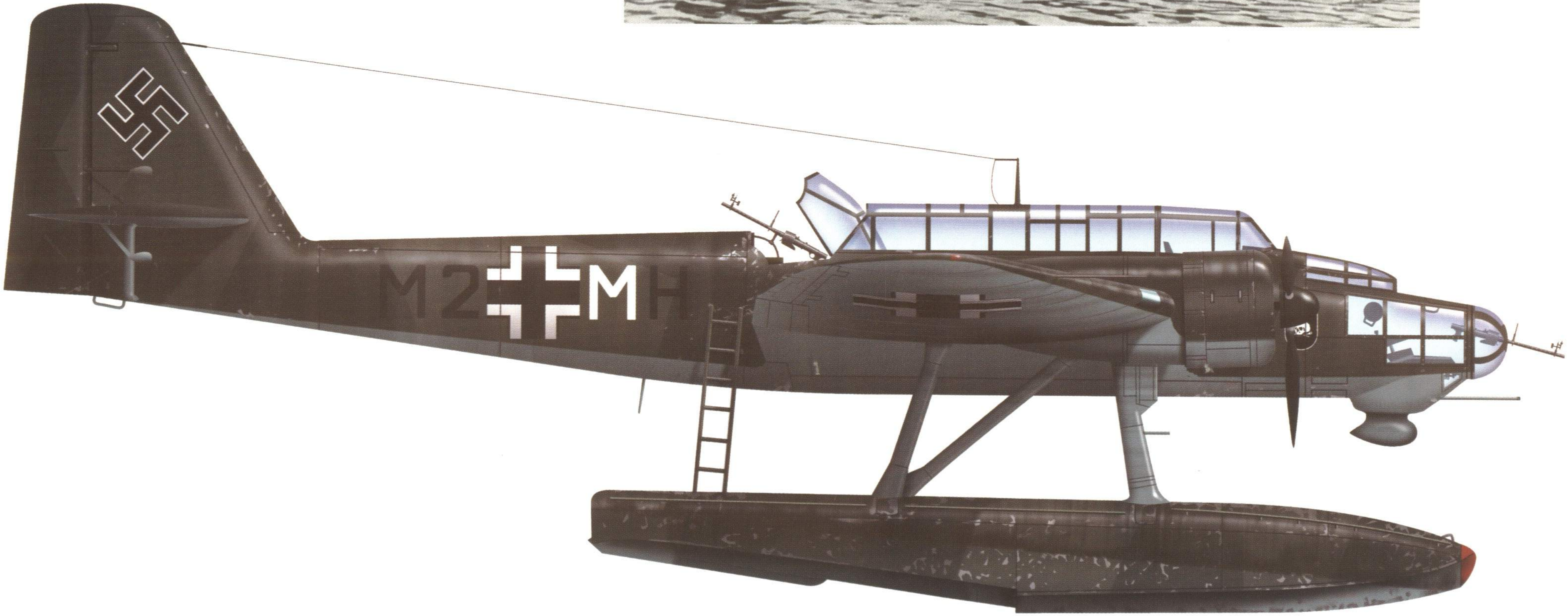


ABOVE: Several Luftwaffe bomber units undertook mine-laying sorties around the British Isles during th period from July 1940 to late 1941. Apart from the dedicated mine-laying Gruppe, KGr 126 (later redesig I./KG 28), the other main unit to undertake these missions was KG 26. Here mines are being readied for loading aboard an He 111 of one of these units' aircraft which has temporary black under surfaces.

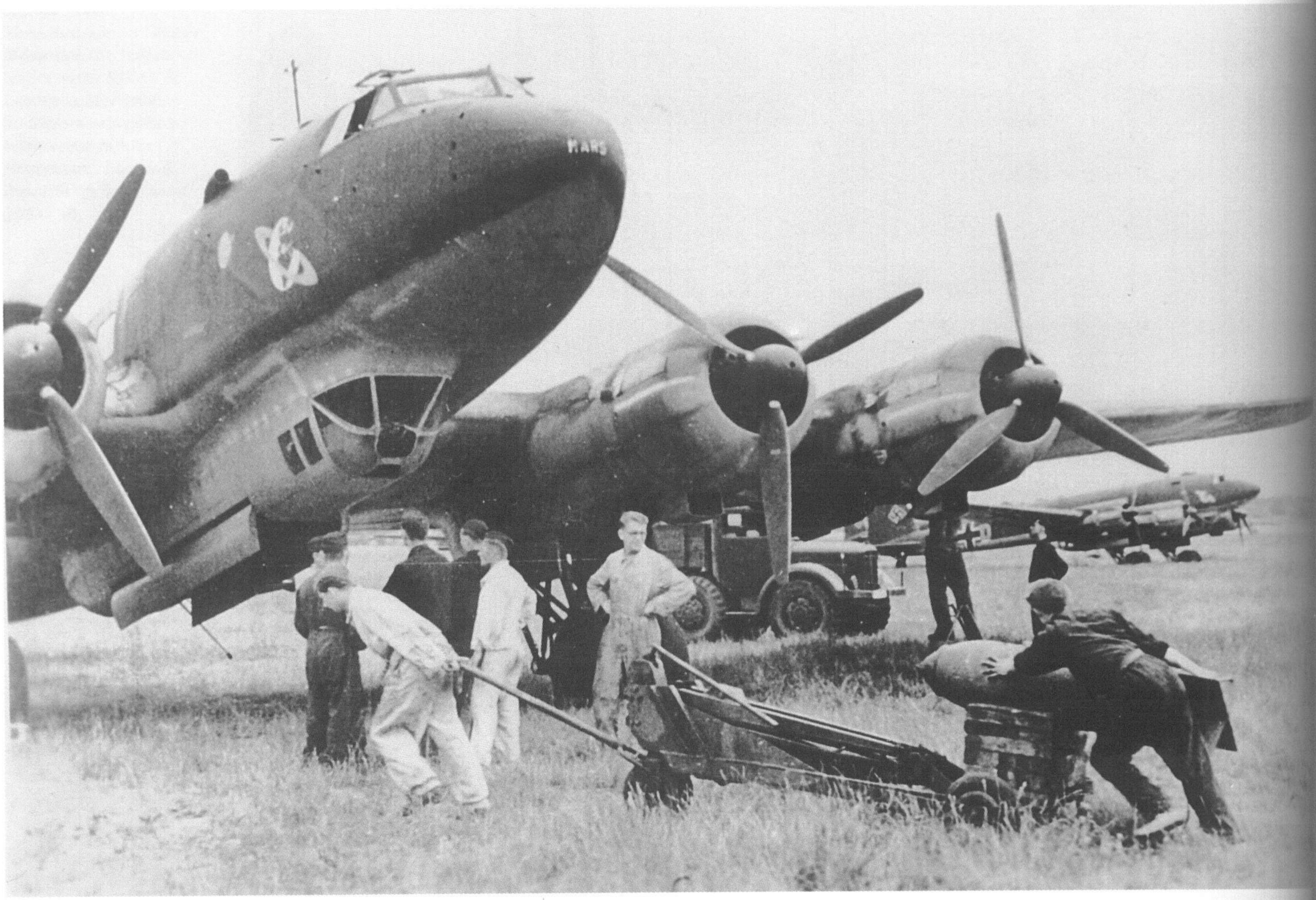
RIGHT: This He 115 C-1, coded M2+MH

RIGHT This He 115 C-1, coded M2+MH of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 106 in Norway, is being re-fuelled by ferrying drums out to the aircraft on a raft and then hand-pumping the fuel into the tanks.

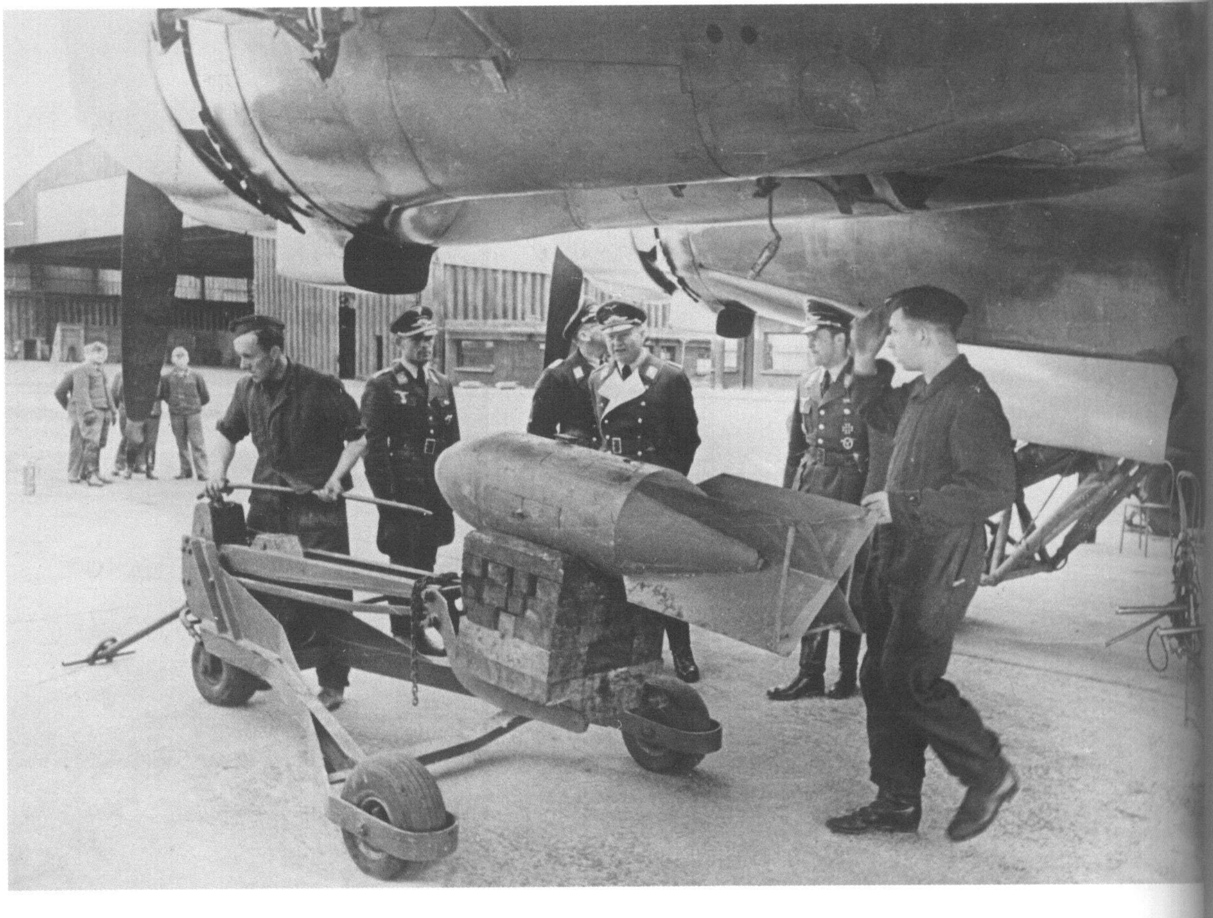


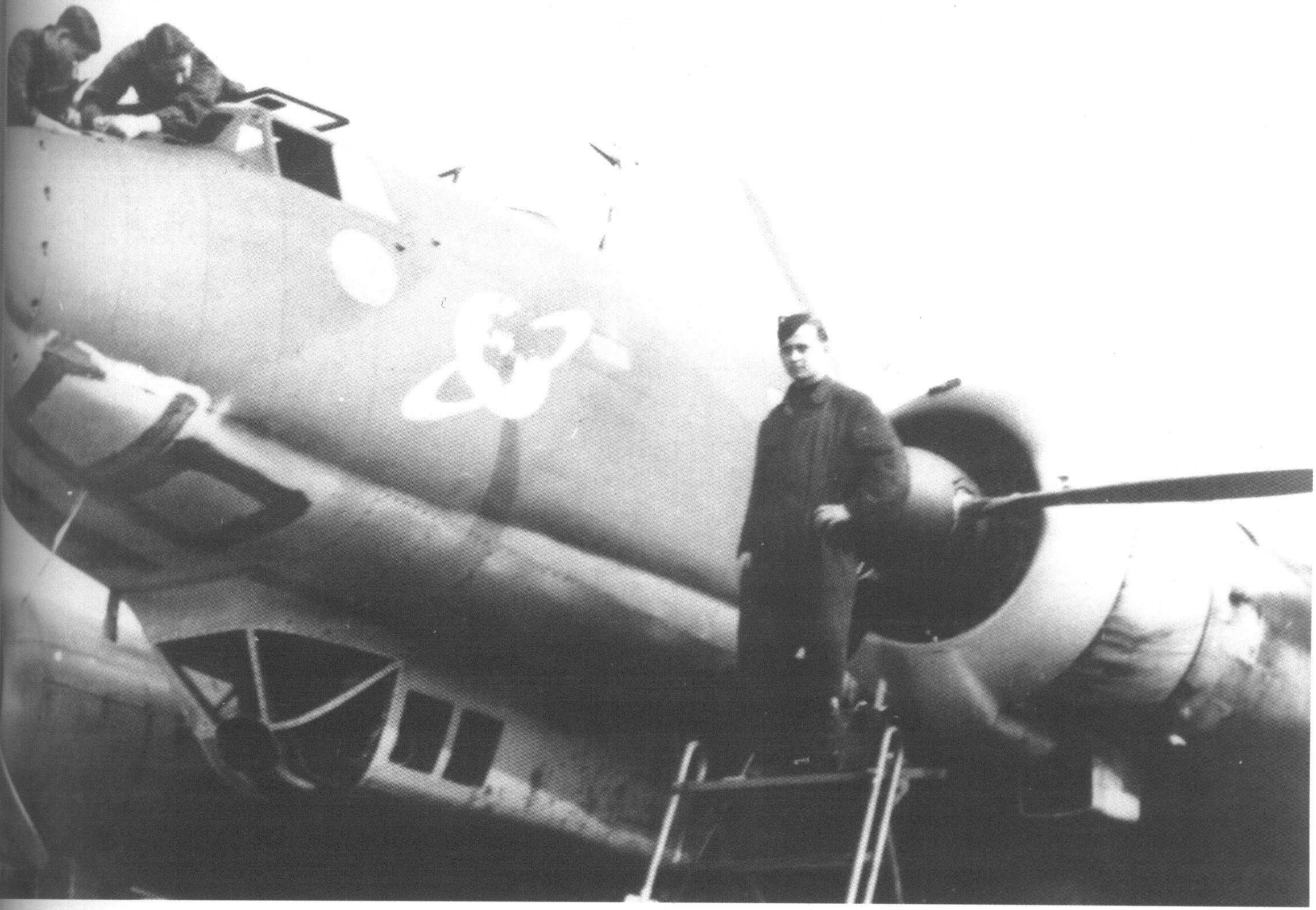


Heinkel He 115 C-1, M2+MH, of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 106
The splinter pattern of RLM 72/73 on the starboard side of the fuselage is clearly visible as is the sharp demarcation line of RLM 65 on the undersurfaces. The aircraft carries the unit code M2+MH, with the letter 'M' being painted white in the Staffel colour.



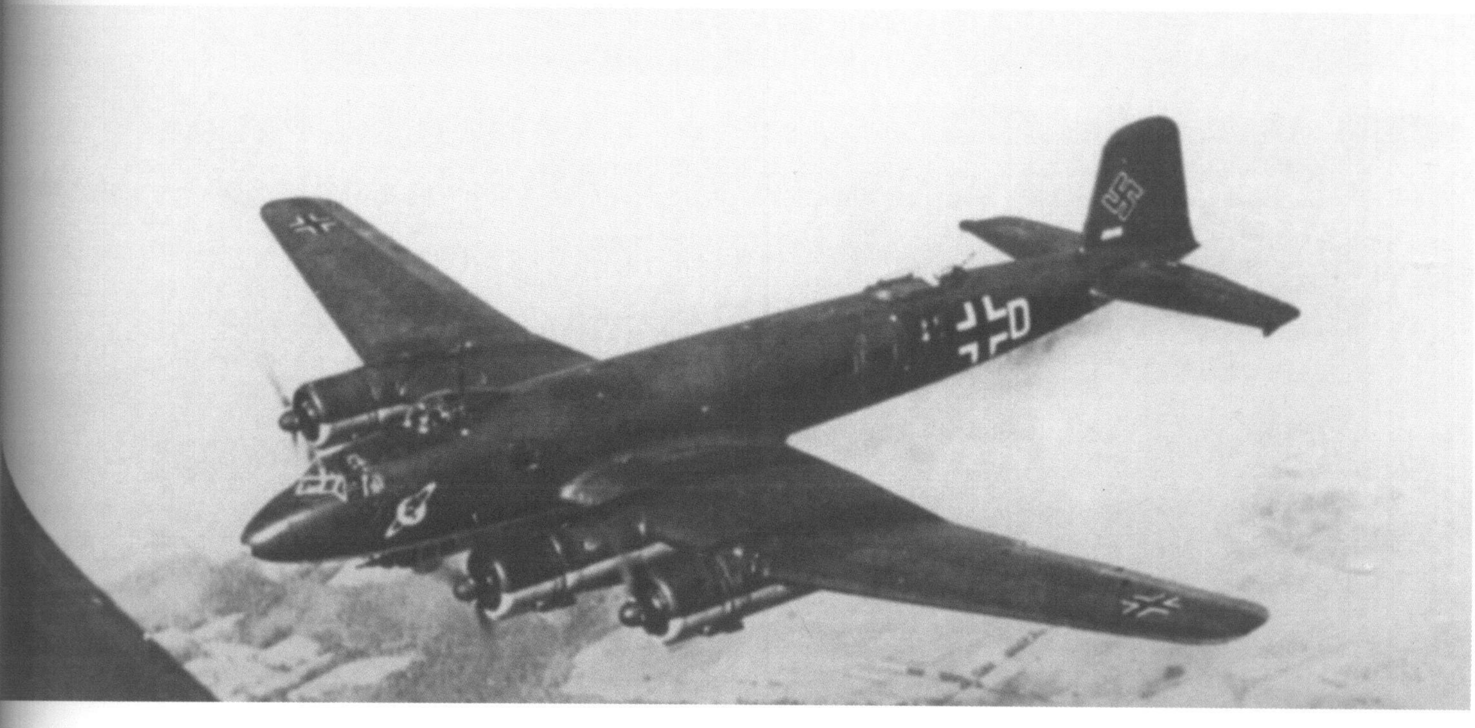
THIS PAGE: These two pictures show the preparation of loading by use of a hydraulic jack some SC 250 bombs outboard of the engines of a Fw 200 Condor of KG 40. Note the use of wooden blocks under the bomb on the hydraulic jack to enable the bomb to be attached to the shackles in these outboard positions. Note also the high-racking Luftwaffe officer watching the loading process in the photograph to the right.

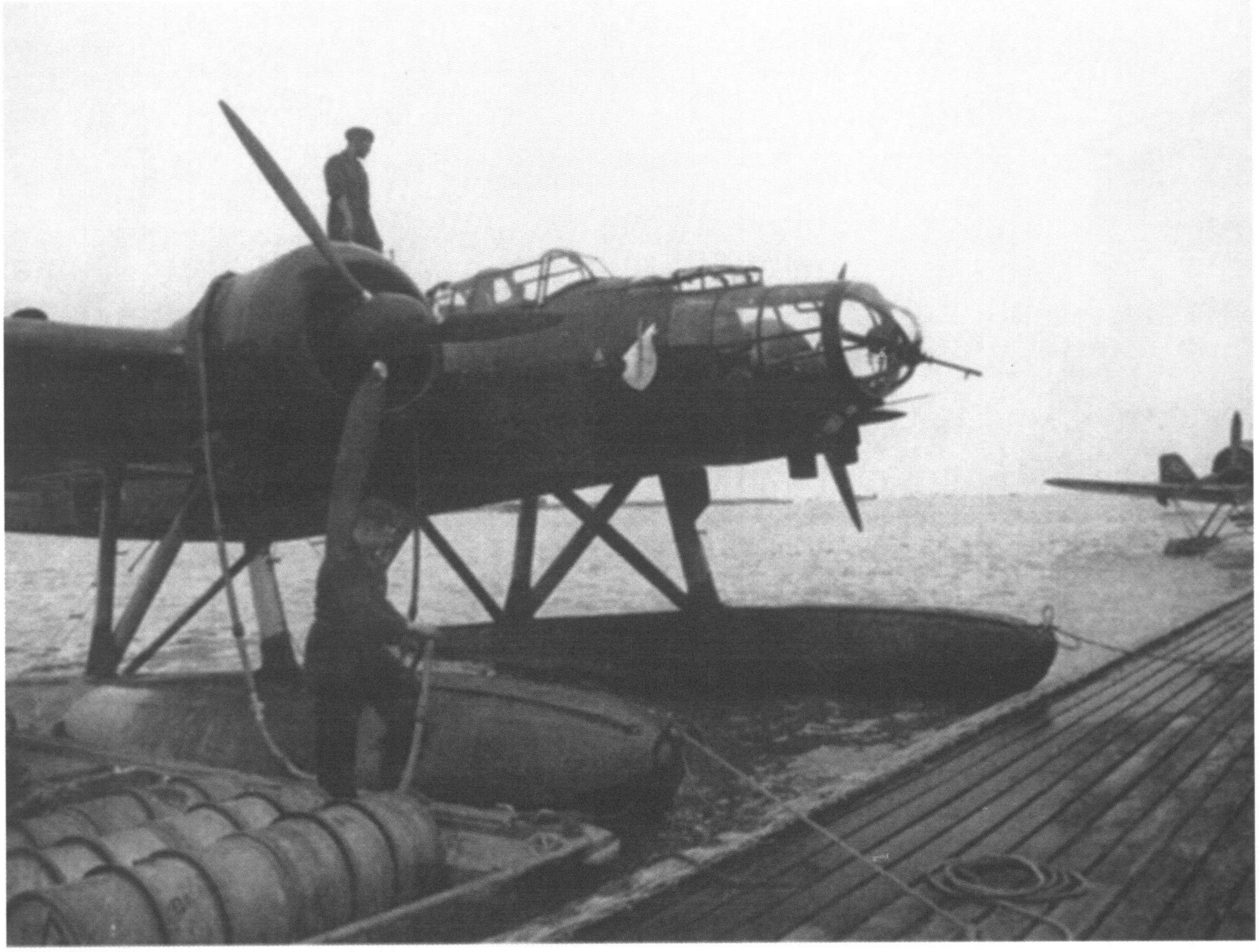




ABOVE: A Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor of I./KG 40 in the process of being serviced in either France or Norway in 1940/41. Note the feathered propeller, lack of armament in the ventral gondola, removed for servicing, and the red oxide primer applied roughly to panel joints under the nose.

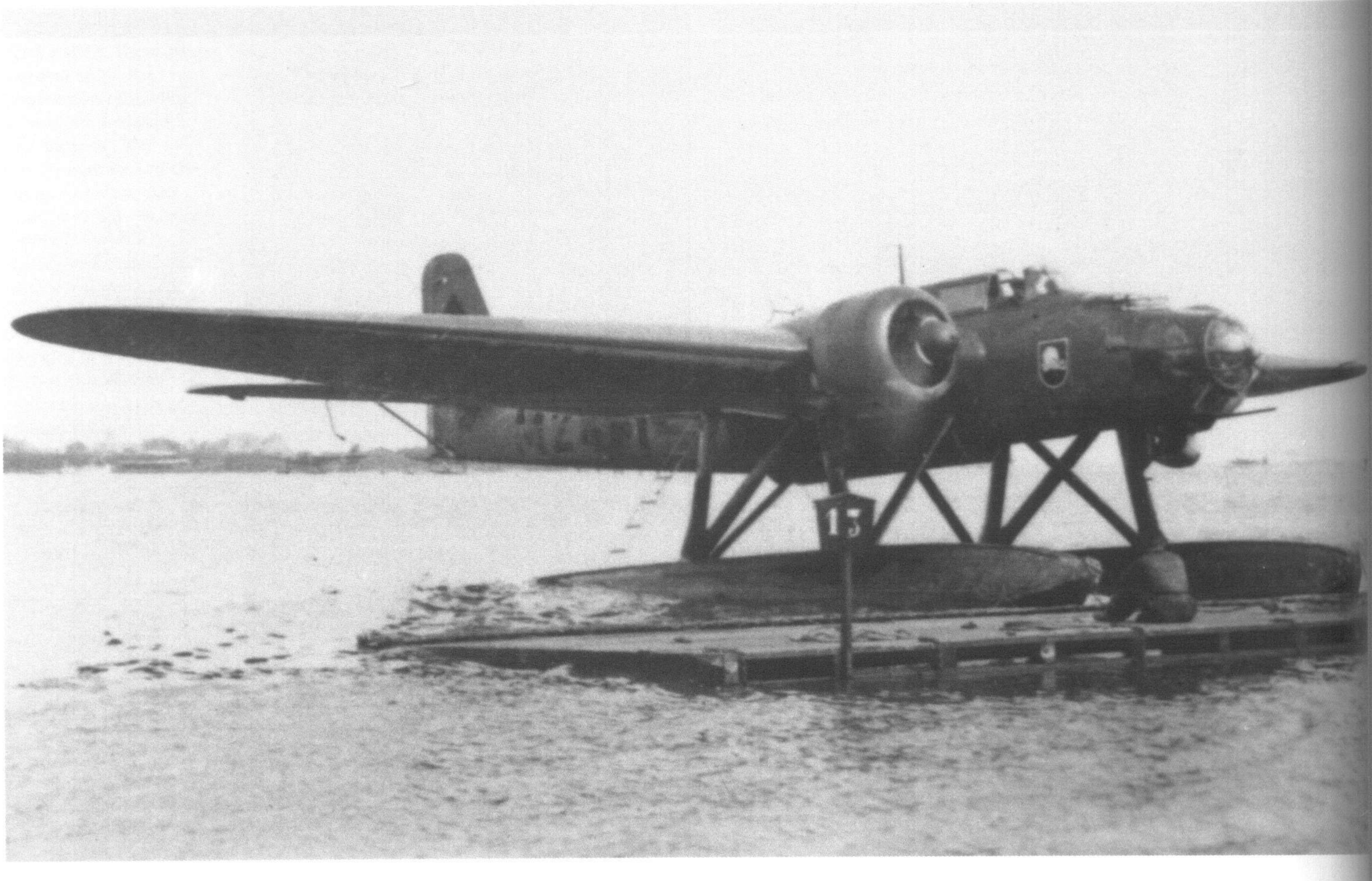
BELOW: Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor C-2, F8 + DL in flight.

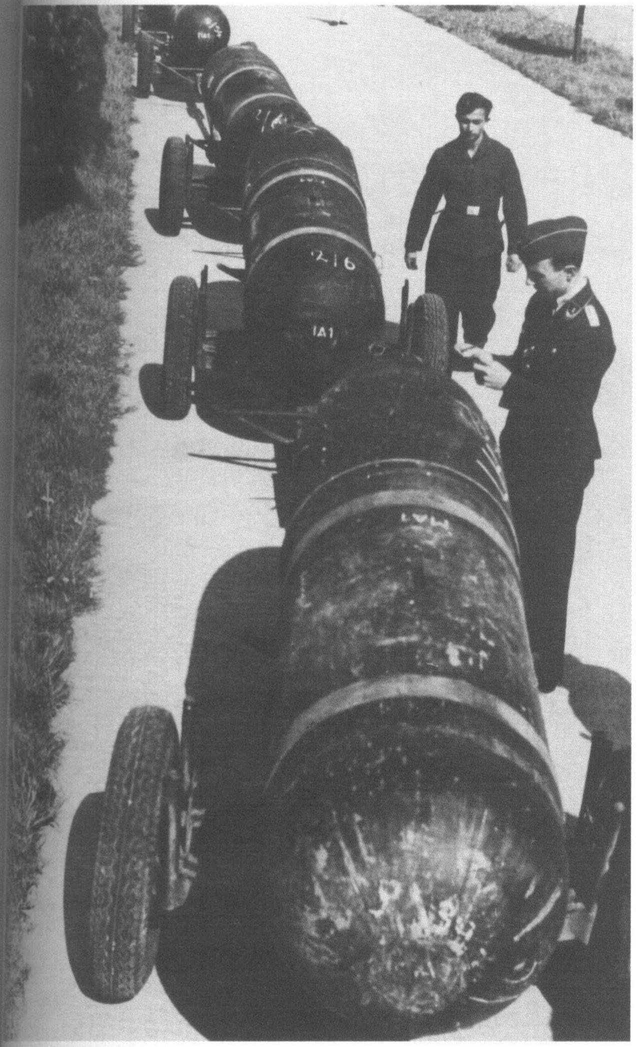




LEFT: A Heinkel He 115 C-1 of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 906 tethered to its ramp in 1940 and about to receive fuel. Note the temporary matt black under surfaces probably signifying a machine involved in nocturnal mine laying. The aircraft also carries the 3.Staffel emblem of a hand clasping a sword over an image of a Viking ship.

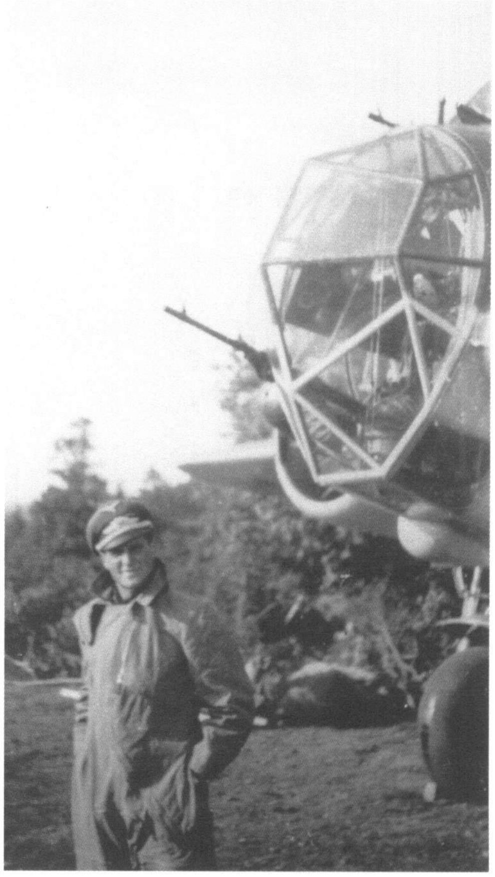
BELOW: A Heinkel He 115 C-1 coded M2+ of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 106, runs its engines up alongside its jetty. Note the Flieger (groundcrew) holding a mooring line during this operation. Additionally note the emblem of the skull and crossbones on a black shield and the well worn temporary matt black on both national insignia, individual aircraft letter and under surfaces and floats for nocturnal missions over the North Sea.

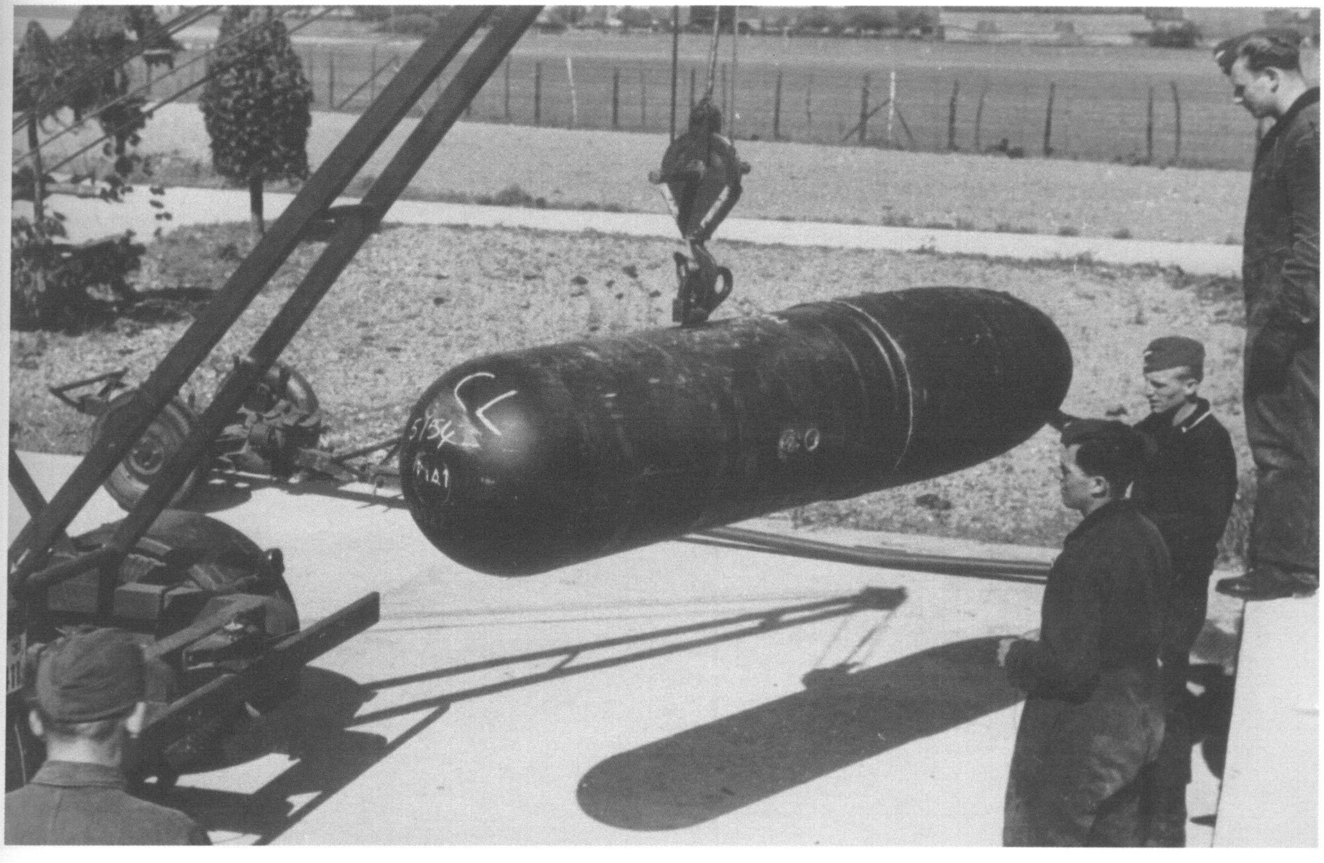




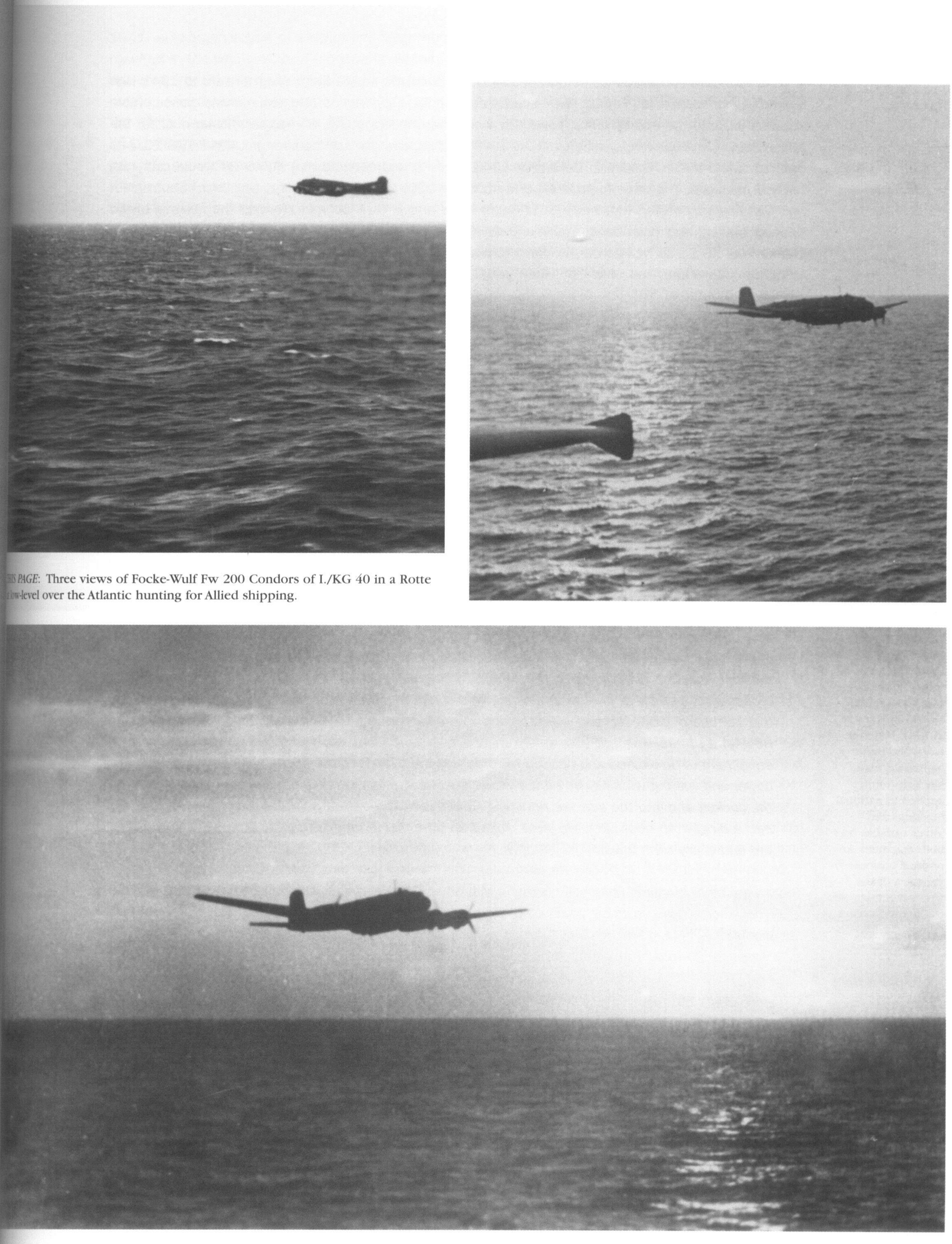
LEFT AND BELOW: Two pictures of the aerial Luftmine B (LMB) with Magnetic Acoustic Detonator. Weighing in at 1000 kg and 2.68 m long, they were triggered magnetically at sea and by a clockwork fuse on land. They were first dropped in UK coastal waters by Heinkel He 115 float planes in November 1939, and first employed against land targets in September 1940. The Luftmine had an explosive filling of around 65 per cent and was capable of creating considerable damage. The mine was dropped by parachute which had a circumference of around 8.2 m and was made of a sea-green artificial silk. The mine fell at a rate of around 64 k/ph and without the parachute the mine could not have withstood the landing impact.

BELOW: A Dornier Do 17 Z-3 of 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 606 sits at its dispersal with possibly Oberfeldwebel Josef Butz photographed in front. He went missing in action on 21 December 1940.





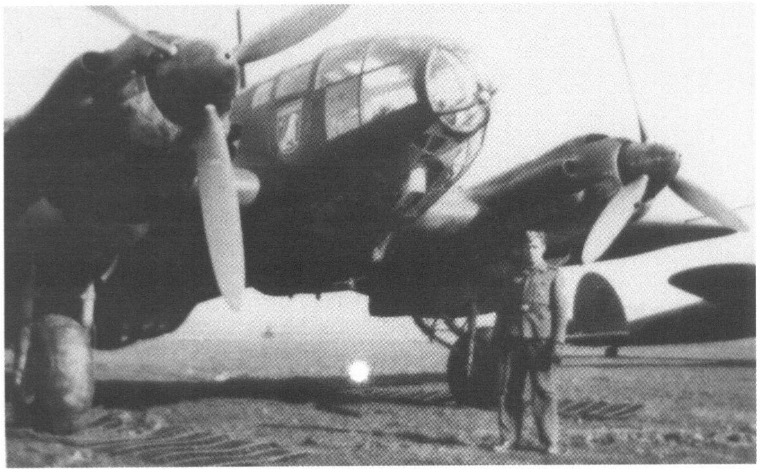
THIS PAGE: Groundcrews carry out maintenance and refuelling on a Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor of KG 40 at Bordeaux-Merignac.



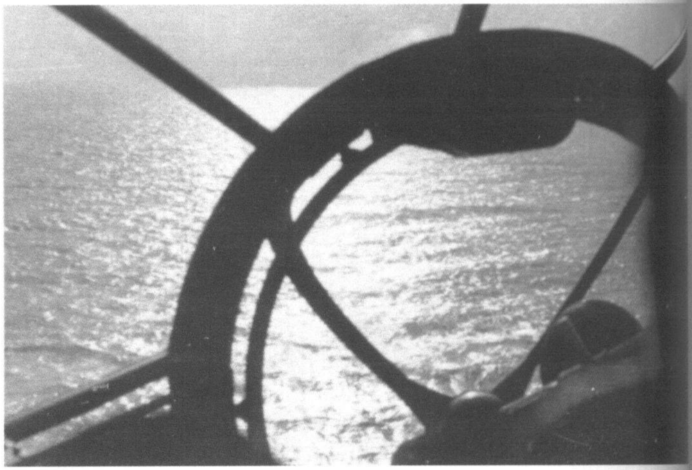
HIS PAGE: Three views of Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condors of I./KG 40 in a Rotte t low-level over the Atlantic hunting for Allied shipping.

Total War – 1941

Buoyed by the successes at the end of 1940, the *Luftwaffe* must have looked forward to 1941 with some confidence. In France, the recently formed IX. *Fliegerkorps* had experienced considerable success towards the end of 1940, especially when the Condors of KG 40 had ranged far out into the Atlantic whilst X. *Fliegerkorps,* subordinate to *Luftflotte* 5, and whose sole bomber unit was II./KG 26, was ordered to the Mediterranean in December 1940 where it was decreed that II./KG 26 would carry out torpedo missions. The three torpedo experts from KG*r* 126, *Oblt* Helmut Lorenz, *Oblt* Josef Saumweber and *Oblt* Friedrich Müller, together with *Lt* Georg Linge and *Lt* Rudi Schmidt, formed the nucleus of the torpedo training and operations. The maritime elements of *Luftflotte 5* now consisted the remaining elements of KG 26 as well as the Heinkel 115-equipped Kü.Fl.Gr 506, both units continuing limited anti-shipping operations as one of the early casualties of the year, *Oblt* Rolf Alander of *Stab/*KG 26, relates:



ABOVE: A pilot stands in front of a Heinkel He 111 of 9./KG 26 on a damp and muddy airfield in Norway in 1941. Note the worn and rather haphazard matt black distemper applied to national markings and lower surfaces on both machines. An unusual (coloured) variation of the Gruppe emblem of the normally black lion can be seen beneath the cockpit, in this case white or yellow on the red shield.



ABOVE: The combined Beobachter (Observer) and Bordschütze (Gunner) of a Heinkel He 111 of 4./KG 26 lies prone in the nose as the aircraft flies into the sun over the North Sea in 1941.

"On 11 March 1941, I took off from Christiansand in Norway to find and attack a large convoy headed north from Edinburgh. At dusk, I spotted the convoy abeam Aberdeen and I attacked the first freighter in the right-hand column. Coming out of the gloom and from the north, we dropped our bombs at low-level, climbing at the last minute. Unfortunately, I hit a mast with the starboard propeller and elevator and immediately had to shut the engine down. The Heinkel 111 H-5 was not able to fly on one engine for long, so I ordered all unnecessary equipment to be ditched and headed towards Holland. However, the port engine began to lose power and without warning, we hit the water. My observer was thrown head-over heels through the cockpit and into the sea; we never saw him again. The rest of us managed to get out and into a dinghy. An hour later, we were picked up by a trawler and landed at Dundee. This was the end of my 50th mission."

There were other maritime units still operating with other *Fliegerkorps*. For example, Kü.Fl.Gr 606, as part of V *Fliegerkorps,* was spending much of its time on conventional bombing raids, as *Lt* Günther Hübner, destined to be shot down bombing London on the night of 17 February 1941 by a night fighter of 219 Squadron flown by Sqn Ldr James Little, explains:

"Kü.Fl.Gr. *606 was originally a navy/air unit for reconnaissance of the North Sea. Some of the other* Gruppen *were equipped with seaplanes and were soon busy rescuing ditched aircrew in the Channel and North Sea. Others, especially those which were equipped with bomber aircraft, were integrated into the* Luftwaffe *and flew raids against the British Isles. As the whole coastline of the Continent was controlled by us Germans by the end of 1940, the original idea of* Küstenfliegergruppen *was no more of great relevance!"*

Nevertheless, the with the escalation of both the Mediterranean air war and the U-boat war out in the Atlantic, there was a very much a future for maritime air operations and this was evident very early on in January 1941. For example, on 16 January 1941, *Hptm* Konrad Verlohr, *Staffel Kapitän* of 1./KG 40, was credited with sinking the freighters *Onoba* and *Meandros,* losses which totalled nearly 11,000 BRT whilst Condors were detached to northern Norway and began flying armed reconnaissance missions off the Faeroes, Iceland and even the shipping lanes approaching Ireland. In mid-February

1941, a re-organisation of *Luftflotten, Fliegerkorps* and *Fliegerdivisionen* was therefore agreed which resulted in the whole of the European coastline facing Great Britain and the Atlantic being covered by anti-shipping aircraft by March 1941. In the North, *Generaloberst* Hans-Jürgen Stumpff's *Luftflotte* 5 created *Fliegerführer Nord* commanded by *Generalleutnant* Alexander Holle from *Stab/*KG 26. Much of the North Sea came under the *Führer der Seeluftstreitkräfte* whilst mine-laying was the responsibility of IX. *Fliegerkorps.* However, the most influential change came with the creation of *Fliegerführer Atlantik,* subordinated to *Generaloberst* Hugo Sperrle's *Luftflotte* 3. Based at Brandérion, a small village to the east of Lorient, and logically commanded by the exponent of offensive maritime aircraft, *Obstlt* Martin Harlinghausen, its tasks were simple. Its aircraft were to carry out armed reconnaissance on behalf of *Befehlshaber der U-boote* reporting the positions and movements of enemy shipping thus aiding attacks by U-boats as well as carrying out conventional attacks on shipping around British coastal waters. As the war progressed, these two aims were simplified to a strategy against enemy shipping in the Atlantic in cooperation with *Befehlshaber der U-boote* and *Marine Gruppe West* and safeguarding the arrival and departure of German surface and sub-surface vessels against enemy attacks (which included operations against enemy supply shipping in the event of an enemy landing). From now on, the name *Fliegerführer Atlantik* is synonymous with the *Luftwaffe's* maritime air war in the West.

One unit which has tended to be overlooked in respect of the early maritime operations of 1941 was KG 28. This *Geschwader* had been formed and disbanded a number of times already but by 22 December 1940, I. *Gruppe,* commanded by *Hptm* Holm Schellmann, had been reformed from KG*r* 126. It is curious that this latter unit only appears as a single *Gruppe* but was still commanded by a *Geschwader Kommodore, Oberst* Ernst-August Roth. Roth, nearly 43 when he took command of KG 28, was yet another officer with a strong Naval pedigree. He joined the Navy in 1916, joining II. *Seeflieger Abteilung* in September 1917. He remained with the *Kriegsmarine* after the war, transferring to the *Luftwaffe* in 1934. Immediately before the war, he commanded Kü.Fl.Gr 106 before serving as *Transport Chef See* on the staff of *General der Luftwaffe beim Oberbefehlshaber der Kriegsmarine.* At the start of the Battle of Britain, he was serving with KG 40 (but in what capacity it is not known), before taking command of KG 28.

The exact nature of KG 28's duties is not known for certain, apart from the fact that two pilots, *Lt* Lothar Horras and *Lt* Wilhelm Neumann both acknowledge that it carried out 'special duties', including cutting barrage balloon cables with specially equipped Heinkel 111s whilst the logbook of another, *Uffz* Thomas Hammerl, shows a mix of missions between 22 December 40 and 17 April 1941 either dropping conventional bombs (four missions), air mines against land targets (five missions) or conventional mining (13 missions). Mindful that KGr 126 had been the mainstay of IX. *Fliegerkorps* mining operations for much of the war to date, it is understandable that it continued to carry out mining or anti-shipping tasks. With the departure of the KGr 126 torpedo experts to 6./KG 26 in December 1940, it is unlikely that KG 28 now undertook torpedo missions.

Flying from Nantes, the first loss for the unit occurred on 31 January 1941 when *Hptm* Reinhold Gottschalk, *Staffel Kapitän* of 2./KG 28 was shot down by light anti-aircraft fire whilst attacking shipping off the Cornish coast. The next loss, just over a month later, was witnessed by *Lt* Wilhelm Neumann:

ELOW AND
ELOW RIGHT:
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200 Condor of
G 40 as it makes
ndezvous with
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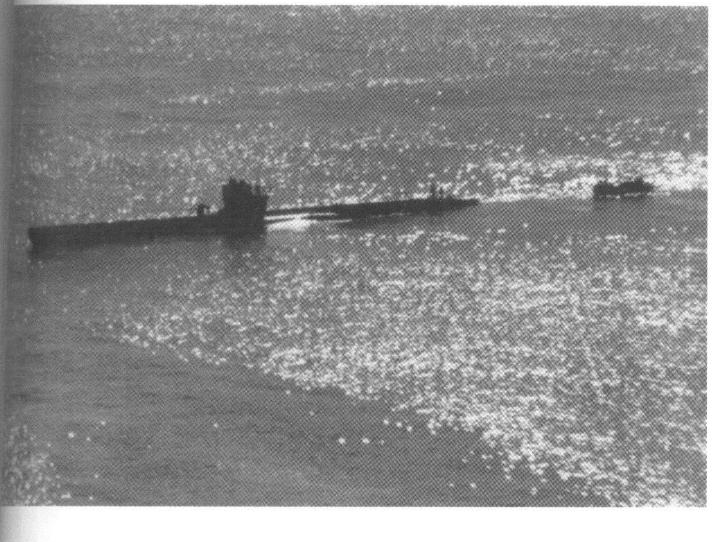
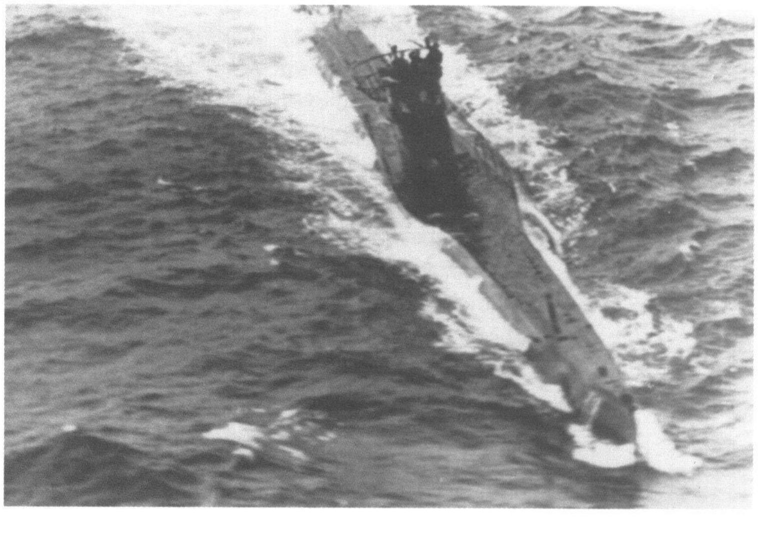




> *"The* Staffel Kapitän *of 1./*KG *28 was* Maj Dr *Roman Auernig, an Austrian officer. He was a very close friend of mine. He was killed over the Bristol Channel on the night of 4-5 March 1941 by* Flak. *I was flying just 200 metres behind him and had a direct hit on the air mines under his aircraft and his Heinkel just exploded. The force of the explosion lifted my aircraft 100 metres upwards..."*

Another aircraft lost that night was also commanded by a good friend of Neumann's, *LtzS* Otto von Hanffstengel, who had until recently been Neumann's observer.

It would appear that this mix of missions continued until the *Gruppe* moved to Russia in July 1941 where it carried out conventional bombing attacks, relinquishing its maritime role altogether. Its last losses in the West occurred on 18 July 1941 off the Scilly Isles when two aircraft were lost, one to Hurricanes of 87 Squadron, but by this time, *Lt* Wilhelm Neumann became a prisoner of war:

> *"On 24 June 1941, I had the mission of observing and attacking shipping between Land's End, the Bristol Channel, St George's Channel and the Irish Sea. This was my tenth night in a row on such missions which must have been my seventieth operational flight. We took off from Nantes at about 2000 hours with two bombs of 1600 and 500 kgs carried externally. At about 2145 hours, we saw a large steamer, possibly a troopship, south of the Eire coast but as it was being escorted by two fighters, thought to have been Bristol Blenheims, we did not attack – it was not yet dark enough. We then headed north up the Irish Sea and waited until it was dark so we could return and attack. However, at 2330 hrs in Carmarthen Bay, we sighted the silhouette of a narrow ship – it had a big bow wave and was headed towards us at full speed. At an altitude of about 30 metres, we made the first attack from the starboard side, dropping the 1600* KG *bomb without receiving any return fire. Whilst over flying the ship, we recognised it as a warship and we believe we hit it astern.*
>
> *"We later returned to where we attacked this ship and saw it stationary. Out of the dark, we attacked it a second time, dropping the last 500* KG *bomb. We saw no gun fire on our approach but on flying over, I saw behind the starboard wing three or four lines of tracer. We remained at 30 metres altitude looking for more targets but after five minutes, my starboard engine stopped and as I was flying my old balloon cutter-equipped aircraft (I was due to get a brand new aircraft on my return), I knew I could not have gained enough height to make it back to France. So settling at 100 metres, I set course for southern Ireland, hoping to ditch in the three mile zone. We ditched all unnecessary equipment, but this did not help and at about midnight, I carried out a text-book ditching eight kilometres off the Irish coast..."*

It is of note that so far, most maritime losses were as a result of *Flak* or accident; operational Condor losses for the first half of 1941 mounted to five to *Flak*, one to an enemy aircraft and three to unknown causes. These losses were irritating, especially since as of April 1941, there were only 25 to 30 Condors on strength and of these, no more than between six and eight were serviceable at any one time – the Condor was particularly prone to mechanical problems and structural failure. To lessen the risk, in November 1941, it was decreed that the practice of low-level attacks be abandoned by KG 40, the crews relying on the superior *Lotfe* 7 bomb sight to attack from altitude and relative safety.

The formation of *Fliegerführer Atlantik* at last saw an expansion of KG 40. 4./KG 40, commanded by *Hptm* Paul Fischer was formed in January 1941 and operated the Heinkel 111 H-6, the *Staffel* becoming operational by the end of April 1941. The remainder of the *Gruppe,* which would be commanded by *Hptm* Wendt *Freiherr* von Schippenbach, began forming with the new Dornier Do 217; the *Gruppe* would not be fully operational with this aircraft until August 1941 by which time 4./KG 40 had traded in its elderly Heinkel He 111s. Meanwhile, in March 1941, III./KG 40, commanded by *Maj* Walther Herbold, formed from I./KG 1, the intention being that this *Gruppe* would operate the Condor when sufficient Condors were available; until then, they would operate with the He 111 and continued to do so until the end of 1941.

Meanwhile, in the Mediterranean, II./KG 26 continued training for its new torpedo role. It is believed that the first three crews began carrying out armed reconnaissance missions armed with torpedoes in February 1941 by which time the *Gruppen Kommandeur, Maj* Helmut Bertram and one of the experienced torpedo exponents, *Oblt* Josef Saumweber, had both been shot down and taken prisoner. It is believed that

Saumweber was lost carrying out an unsuccessful torpedo attack on a convoy leaving Benghazi only to be shot down by *Flak*. Bertram's place was taken by the *Staffel Kapitän* of 6./KG 26, *Hptm* Robert Kowalewski, a pilot whose name would be linked to maritime operations for the remainder of the war.

Nevertheless, early torpedo missions continued to be dogged by a lack of success. An attack on a convoy off Malta on 21 February damaged a freighter but resulted in the loss of a 4./KG 26 bomber to a carrier-borne fighter whilst another Heinkel 111was damaged; whether these two aircraft were engaged on torpedo operations is not known for certain. A few unconfirmed attacks occurred in the weeks that followed, but the attack that confirmed to both sides that torpedo operations were developing occurred on 16 March 1941 when two aircraft from II./KG 26, flown by *Hptm* Robert Kowalewski (with *Oblt Helmut* Lorenz, *Ofw* Paul Henze and *Fw* Lehmann) and *Lt* Karl-Heinz Bock (with *Ofw* Herbert Schütze, *Uffz* Horst Brückner and *Fw* Hans Katen) ,'successfully' attacked a British naval force 30 nautical miles west of Crete. It was only a success from the German viewpoint in that both aircraft attacked using effective torpedo tactics and returned without damage. Although two warships were claimed damaged, none were hit. The apparent incapacitation of these ships was believed by the Italian Navy who then sailed to attack British convoys only to be intercepted by the 'incapacitated' warships off Cape Matapan on 28 March 1941, losing three cruisers and two heavy destroyers in the process. It was coincidental that then from the end of March 1941 onwards, torpedo operations were severely limited by a shortage of torpedoes and warheads and the maritime actions that occurred in the months that followed tended to be predominantly of a more conventional nature undertaken by aircraft more used to attacks on land targets.

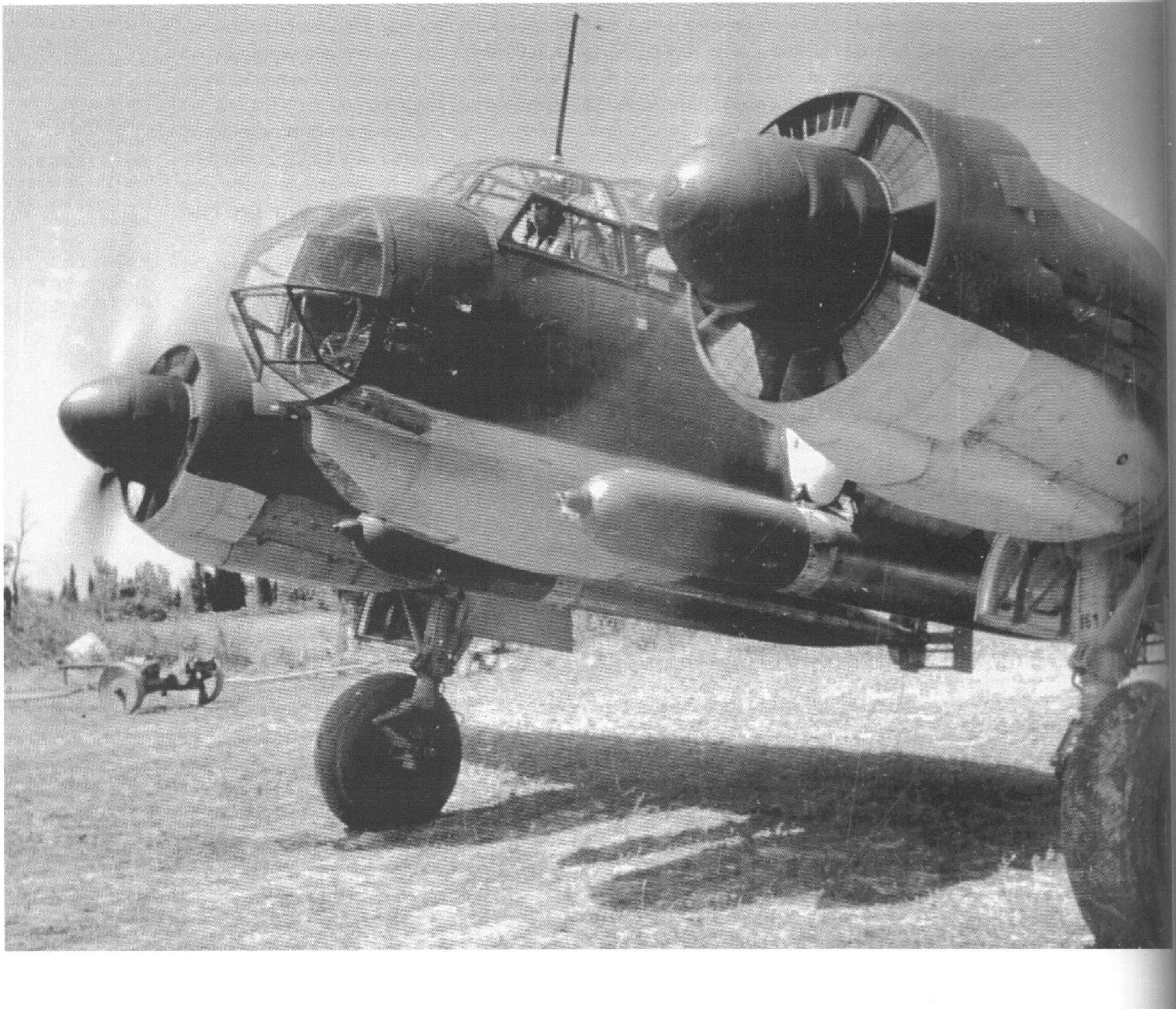
ABOVE: Robert Kowalewski here dressed as a Major was a very successful bomber and later torpedo specialist in the Mediterranean. He flew with KG 40 and KG 26 during his career and can be seen here wearing the Ritterkreuz, Narvik badge and Mission Clasp.

Meanwhile, German forces were being withdrawn from bases in the west in preparation for operations over Russia. Again, mindful of the landmass, the vast majority of bombers were assigned to land targets, maritime operations being undertaken by *Obstlt* Wolfgang von Wild's *Fliegerführer Ostsee* whose only offensive unit was *Maj* Hans Emig's KGr 806. KGr 806 played its part from the start of Operation *Barbarossa*, mining Kronstadt harbour and attacking and sinking a number of freighters. However, such missions were not without incident – on 28 June 1941, *Maj* Emig's Junkers Ju 88 suffered a direct hit from Soviet *Flak* whilst mining the Stalin Canal; no trace of he or his crew were found following the instantaneous explosion of the 1000 kg mine he was carrying. His replacement, *Maj* Herbert Hartwig, was equally unlucky, being killed by *Flak* on 13 August 1941; his replacement, *Maj* Richard Linke, who had commanded KGr 806 during the Battle of Britain only to be transferred to be *Gruppen Kommandeur* of I./KG 54 early in 1941, was luckier-surviving the war during which time was awarded the *Ritterkreuz* and *Deutsches Kreuz in Gold.* KGr 806 would continue offensive operations singled handed until September 1941, by which time *Obtslt* Walter Schwarz's Kü.Fl.Gr 506 had converted from the He 115 to the Ju 88 and joined it at Riga, albeit for a short time. Under a month later, Kü.Fl.Gr 506 moved back to the West and KGr 806 went with the rest of *Luftflotte* 2 to operate in the Mediterranean. It is believed that 1./KG 28 and 6./KG 26 were transferred to the Russian Front to carry out torpedo attacks against the Soviet Black Seas Fleet and shipping sailing from Odessa but that most missions were flown as armed reconnaissance. As most Soviet shipping used the cover of darkness, torpedo attack successes were few and far between and 6./KG 26, operating out of Buzau, Romania, reported sinking just 20,000 GRT of shipping between October and December. It remained in the east, flying from Saki in the Crimea where it was joined by the rest of II./KG 26 in March 1942. I./KG 28 was reformed as III./KG 26 in December 1941 and then remained on the Russian Front on conventional bombing missions. From then on, any maritime offensive operations on the Russian Front were undertaken by conventional bomber units and II./KG 26 (until November 1942); for the *Luftwaffe,* the maritime air war on the Eastern Front was very much secondary to the land war and consequently, little has been recorded.

The main maritime war still remained to the west, centered around the United Kingdom. The battles that culminated in the sinking of the battleship *Bismarck* on 27 May 1941 saw a flurry of air activity in an attempt to attack the considerable number of British warships involved. Crews from 3/Kü.Fl.Gr 506 were rushed to the newly formed *Luftwaffen Torpedoschule* at Grossenbrode where they took three Heinkel 111s each armed with two torpedoes. Operating from Brest on 28 May 1941, they failed to find any targets. In the meantime, KGr 100, the specialist pathfinder unit which had been temporarily assigned to *Fliegerführer Atlantik*, launched 14 aircraft against British warships reported between 150 kms south-west and 150 kms north-west of the western coast of southern Ireland. Before bad weather intervened, they located two cruisers and four destroyers; the Commanding Officer of HMS *Tartar* reported what occurred:

> *"At 0830 hours on 28 May, a four-engined FW Condor was sighted astern, evidently shadowing. Other aircraft appeared almost immediately and the first attack took place at about 0840 hours. Avoiding action was taken on each occasion but the shortage of fuel rendered high speed for long periods impossible. Aircraft taking part were He 111s and the majority of bombs appeared to be about 250 lbs... There were seldom less than five aircraft in sight at a time. Attacks continued and at 0915, HMS Mashona, a mile on my starboard beam, was straddled and received a hit port side abreast the bridge... At about 10 o'clock, an aircraft was being engaged on the port beam flying from left to right when one round from the 4 inch mounting scored a direct hit. Pieces were seen to fall from aircraft, also a trail of smoke. The aircraft flew on for a half a minute before she dived towards the sea, the volume of smoke increasing. On striking the sea, there was a large amount of smoke in the middle of which one wing of an aircraft could be clearly seen... There was a pause in the attacks from about 1030 until 1230 during which period rescue operations were carried out. Shadowing aircraft were, however, still in attendance and a renewal of attacks were expected at any time. Mashona commenced abandoning ship at about 1030..."*

BELOW: Late in 1941 Luftwaffe anti-shipping aircraft gained a new weapon when the air-launched torpedo was introduced into service. This Ju 88 carries two such weapons under the wing centre section.



The only German casualty was a Heinkel 111 of KGr 100 which returned slightly damaged and with a wounded crew member.

Another concerted effort by the *Luftwaffe* four days later to attack a convoy off the eastern British coast. The presence of this convoy, numerous merchant ships with a heavy escort prompted immediate attacks by aircraft from Kü.Fl.Gr 506 and KG 30. The former unit was still believed to be operating some He 111s picked up from the *Luftwaffen Torpedoschule* at Grossenbrode. KG 30 had mainly been carrying out conventional attacks interspersed with the occasional minelaying trip – the logbook for a crew-member from 3./KG 30 starting 3 January 1941 shows 14 conventional attacks on cities the length and breadth of the United Kingdom, four minelaying and one anti-shipping mission before 2 June 1941. On this date, he recorded two hits by two SC 500 bombs on the starboard side of a 3,000 BRT freighter located off Scarborough. The returning German crews reported being attacked by Spitfires – two 485 Sqn reported attacking and damaging a Ju 88 near Hornsea which could well have been the aircraft flown by *Fw* Martin Frohberg of 3./KG 30 which returned to Eindhoven undamaged. However, the Commanding Officer of 485 Squadron successfully intercepted a 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 506 Ju 88 off Cleethorpes, killing *Ofw* Hans Vieck and his crew whilst two Hurricanes of 317 Squadron shot down another 3./Kü.Fl.Gr 506 Ju 88 off Newcastle, killing *Ofw* Bernhard Winse and his crew. Kü.Fl.Gr 506 had reported sinking a ship of 10,000 BRT with a torpedo as well as attacking an aircraft carrier that night. It is thought that the carrier was in fact HMS *Mamari,* a merchant ship disguised to look like an aircraft carrier – she was reportedly sunk by German warships the night after. The KG 30 sinking could well have been the 2,500 GRT *Beaumanoir* whilst the following day, the 2,200 GRT *Royal Fusilier* was sunk by German aircraft off Sunderland. Of note is that for the next two months, up to the *Gruppe* re-deploying to Banak in northern Norway, *Fw* Frohberg and his crew carried out predominantly anti-shipping operations – three mine laying trips, nine anti-shipping missions and just five bombing missions against mainland targets; the reason for this shift in emphasis is unknown.

It still remained that anti-shipping operations were still very much an unknown quantity. Despite now having a *Luftwaffen Torpedoschule* at Grossenbrode, aircrew flying on torpedo operations were still given basic training as the dropping of a torpedo was considered to be akin to dropping a bomb! However, proof that this belief was flawed came later that summer when plans to attack British warships at anchor in Gibraltar and Alexandria had to be abandoned once it was concluded that torpedoes would need to be dropped from a height of 30 metres and even then, the relatively shallow waters in the harbour would mean that they would hit the seabed. Even an experienced anti-shipping pilot, *Oblt* Herwig *Ritter* von Heider, *Staffel Kapitän* of 2/Kü.Fl.Gr 606, stated:

IGHT: berleutnant erwig Ritter von eider, affelkapitän of 2/Kü.Fl.Gr 606 was a successful mber and anti-ipping pilot on oth the Dornier Do 17 and later the nkers Ju 88. He nd his crew ecame POWs on 15 September 1941 fter an attack on a onvoy off the east nglish coast. They were engaged by a urricane flown by quadron Leader ancis Soper of 257 Squadron which damaged an ngine, ecessitating a itching in the sea.

LEFT: Sonderführer (and war correspondent) Rudolf Hartmann of 2/Kü.Fl.Gr 606 was Oberleutnant Herwig Ritter von Heider's regular air gunner. He was replaced by another Sonderführer (and war correspondent) Hans-Werner Kelch for the 15 September 1941 operations which saw von Heider ditch in the sea after combat with a Hurricane.

> "*With the exception of a special course where we were trained to identify warships (French and Dutch, but no British!), we had been given* no *special training for anti-shipping missions"*

Von Heider had been on operations since the start of the war and he and his crew had between 70 and 120 operational flights. They had recently converted to the Junkers Ju 88 from the Dornier Do 17 and since then had carried out a mix of land and maritime missions. Despite his lack of training in anti-shipping operations, he had much success as he recalls:

> "Kü.Fl.Gr *606 was said to be the most successful anti-shipping unit over the Atlantic. We had claimed 350,000 BRT of British shipping in three months. I alone had been credited with 51,000 BRT. The night before my last flight on 15 September 1941, I had sunk a transport vessel of 10,000 BRT. The same night* Fliegerführer Atlantik, Obstlt *Harlinghausen, phoned to congratulate me and to say that he had recommended me for the* Ritterkreuz.
>
> "*A convoy had been reported off the English east coast, consisting of two big merchantmen protected by barrage balloons and escorted by several destroyers. There was a layer of cloud at about 1,935 metres. The first attack was to be carried out with one of the four 500* KG *bombs in a shallow high-speed dive (about 684 km/h) in daylight at about 1930 hours.*
>
> "*The reason I chose this kind of attack was the war correspondent who had replaced my regular air gunner,* Sonderführer *Hans-Werner Kelch, wanted to take good camera shots of the attack on the ships. This would turn out to be fatal when we were later attacked from behind! The regular war correspondent,* Sonderführer *Rudolf Hartmann, had been with us on about ten previous missions.*
>
> "*Usually the attacks were carried out at lowest level (about five metres), so low that I very often had problems to avoid hitting the masts of the ships after the bomb had been dropped. The bombs were dropped in a way that they did not hit the ships broadside but hit the water in front of the ship's side and sank beneath the ship. The bombs were equipped with time fuses and normally detonated about ten metres deep, this way breaking the ship's back.*
>
> "*The first attack on one of the convoy's ships failed because of the low clouds- we were not able to begin our dive high enough. After the attack, I climbed again to reach the shelter of the clouds and wait for dusk, but just before we reached the layer of clouds, we were attacked by a Hurricane. I tried to escape and to fly back to our base at Schiphol but there were more attacks – two of my crew were wounded and an engine seized up – that was the end.*
>
> "*I was able to ditch the Junkers on the water at about 1945 hours. Due to the weight of the fuel and the remaining three bombs the aircraft sank very quickly. I had strapped in very tightly before the dive attack and now had big problems in unbuckling. I was only was able to free myself when the aircraft had hit the seabed, about 21-24 metres down.*
>
> "*The aircraft's dinghy was useless because it had been punctured during the fighter attacks so we had to swim and wait for help. The observer, who had been shot in the face and chest, was in danger of drowning so I supported him until we were rescued. The Hurricane circled a few times above them, probably to obtain bearings from a direction finding station to lead ships to the German survivors and, of course, the pilot wanted to prove his claim. After about one and a quarter hours, in pitch-black night, we were picked up by three trawlers."*

The British report as a result of von Heider's capture gave more written information on German anti-shipping operations, showing how simple these were as a result of no formal tactics or doctrine:

> "*Attacks on shipping were only made when cloud cover was available and consequently the height of the dive was dependant on the cloud ceiling. If the dive was sufficiently long for terminal velocity to be reached, the bombs would be released on the pull-out commenced at about 3,000 feet, since the aircraft required 1,500-1,600 feet to pull out from this speed. In practice, however, owing to cloud conditions, dives were more often started at 4,000-5,000 feet. From this height, either a shallow dive of about 30 degrees was made or a short steep dive of 70-80 degrees. In either case, the dive would not be sufficiently long for a very high speed to be reached, even without using dive-brakes, and the pull-out could be commenced with safety from as low at 800-1,000 feet. Under ideal conditions, a dive attack would always be made into the wind but in dusk and night attacks, the policy was to attack from the dark*

scanned by alfetta

> *quarter of the sky in order to get the ship silhouetted against any available light. Where this angle of attack was not directly with or against the wind, allowance for drift would be made by rule of thumb. Even on moonless nights, cloud cover at not too great a height was regarded as almost essential for this type of attack, not only to provide cover from searchlights but also to enable surprise attacks to be made."*

Despite this lack of training, *Fliegerführer Atlantik,* now by the end of June 1941 the primary anti-shipping strike force in the West, continued to take the fight to British shipping far out into the Atlantic and its primary unit was a now expanded KG 40 commanded by *Maj* Edgar Petersen. By the height of the summer of 1941, *Fliegerführer Atlantik's* primary offensive aircraft consisted *Hptm* Edmund Daser's I./KG 40 with 28 Fw 200s, *Hptm* Wendt *Freiherr* von Schlippenbach's II./KG 40 with 24 Do 217s and *Hptm* Robert Kowalewski's III./KG 40 with 20 Heinkel He 111s as well as *Obstlt* Joachim Hahn's KGr 606 with 20 Junkers Ju 88s and two *Staffeln* from *Obstlt* Axel Blessingh's Kü.Fl.Gr 906 with nine Heinkel He 115s, albeit this latter unit appears to have been used predominantly in the reconnaissance role. These forces were reinforced as necessary by elements from IX. *Fliegerkorps* – the Ju 88s of II. and III./KG 30 and Dornier Do 217s of II./KG 2. However, by September 1941, KG 30 had departed from Holland with KGr 606 leaving for the Mediterranean in December 1941. Furthermore, II./KG 40 was assigned to IX. *Fliegerkorps* and in addition to some anti-shipping missions, was increasingly used in attacks on mainland targets. This was believed to have been as a result of Hitler, mindful of German public opinion, increasing the attacks on mainland Britain as a result of Bomber Command's increasing attacks on Germany. Furthermore, from 13 October 1941, *Fliegerführer Atlantik* was leaderless when *Obstlt* Martin Harlinghausen was wounded by *Flak* in an attack on a ship – his pilot, *Ofw* Friedrich Doucha and engineer *Ofw* August Sichelschmidt were also injured when his *Fliegerführer Atlantik Führungskette* Heinkel He 111 ditched off Vannes; Harlinghausen never returned to be *Fliegerführer Atlantik*, his place being taken temporarily by *GenMaj* Wolfgang von Wild, formerly *Fliegerführer Ostsee,* before *GenLt* Ulrich Kessler was posted in permanently in January 1942.

As to torpedo operations, it is believed that there was an intention for the Focke-Wulf Fw 200 to carry torpedoes some time during the summer of 1941 but trials were abandoned apparently due to the unreliability of the torpdeoes- a concern which was voiced over a year before Furthermore, it has been stated that *Hptm* Herzfeld's 7./KG 40 undertook torpedo attacks until 17 November 1941 but there is little evidence to support this. However, according to a document produced by III./KG 40, in August 1941, the *Gruppe,* commanded by one of the early exponents of torpedo attacks, Robert Kowalewski, was utilised by *Fliegerführer Atlantik* for torpedo attacks and IX. *Fliegerkorps* for mining. On 26 August 1941, Kowalewski took the torpedo qualified crews of his *Gruppe* to the Mediterranean, operating out of Athens-Eleusis together with KG 26, on torpedo attacks as well as conventional bombing missions; this *Kommando* suffered two losses during this time, only one in action when *Oblt* Heinz Tauber of 8./KG 40 and his crew were shot down and taken prisoner attacking Abu Suier on 6 September 1941. Two days later, the surviving crews returned to Beauvais in northern France where they continued carrying out more conventional anti-shipping and bombing attacks. Again, on 28 September 1941, Kowalewski took a *Luft Torpedo Kommando* to carry out operations from Lannion in western France, returning to Beauvais two days later. At the start of October 1941, III./KG 40 was placed firmly under the command of *Fliegerführer Atlantik* operating from Brest but curiously, on 13 October 1941, the torpedo crews, led by *Hptm* Franz Brey, the *Staffel Kapitän* of 9./KG 40, moved to Soesterburg in Holland where they came under IX. *Fliegerkorps* and where they remained until 15 January 1942 by which time III./KG 40 was converting to the Fw 200; in April 1942, the torpedo-qualified crews from the *Gruppe* transferred to KG 26.

BELOW: Generalleutnant Ulrich Kessler became Fliegerführer Atlantik in January 1942 after the post was held temporarily by Generalmajor Wolfgang von Wild, formerly Fliegerführer Ostsee, due in turn to the wounding in action on 13 October 1941 of Fliegerführer Atlantik, Oberstlteutnant Martin Harlinghausen. Ulrich Kessler was previously leader of KG 1 at Kolberg during the Polish campaign in 1939.

Further out into the Atlantic, the Condors of I./KG 40 continued to be a menace to Allied

LEFT: The highly experienced Gruppen Kommandeur and holder of the Ritterkreuz, Hauptmann Fritz Fliegel, of I./KG 40 seen here second from right. He was lost on operations with his crew on 18 July 1941, a victim of ships' flak. The danger of the operations performed in and around the mid period of 1941, even by experienced crews is shown in the number of Ritterkreuze awarded. Allied shipping losses were relatively high but so was the cost for the Condor crews.

shipping but losses had become a problem – two *Ritterkreuzträger* had been lost – *Oblt* Hans Buchholz of 1. *Staffel* on 19 May 1941 and *Hptm* Fritz Fliegel, the *Gruppen Kommander*, on 18 July 1941, both victims of ship's *Flak.* Then, on 24 July 1941, *Hptm* Konrad Verlohr, *Staffel Kapitän* of 1. *Staffel,* went missing west of Ireland. In the months that followed, losses were lighter – just six aircraft were lost in action between August and December 1941, none of which involved executive officers of the *Gruppe.* However, confirmed sinkings by Condors were considerably less during this period. In the first two months of 1941, Condors had a hand in sinking some 39 ships and in the region of 17 from March to July 1941 but just four were sunk or badly damaged by such aircraft during the last five months of 1941; it is clearly understandable why so many pilots had been awarded the *Ritterkreuz* by the middle of 1941.

Condors were also being prevented from attacking ships and been relegated to shadowing duties by more effective defences, rather than ships relying on ships' anti-aircraft guns. A number of merchant vessels, such as the 8,000 BRT *Maplin* had been converted to Fighter Catapult ships, equipped with 'launch and forget' Hurricanes. The first victory went to Lieut Bob Everett on 3 August 1941 when he was scrambled to intercept a Condor which he claimed to have shot down before he baled out of his Hurricanes and was quickly picked up. The Condor managed to make it back to France where it was destroyed in the crash-landing, killing two of its crew and injuring the weather forecaster.

An additional defensive measure was the introduction of the escort carrier; one of the first pilots to fly from such a carrier was Sub Lieut Eric Brown:

Hauptmann Edmund Daser

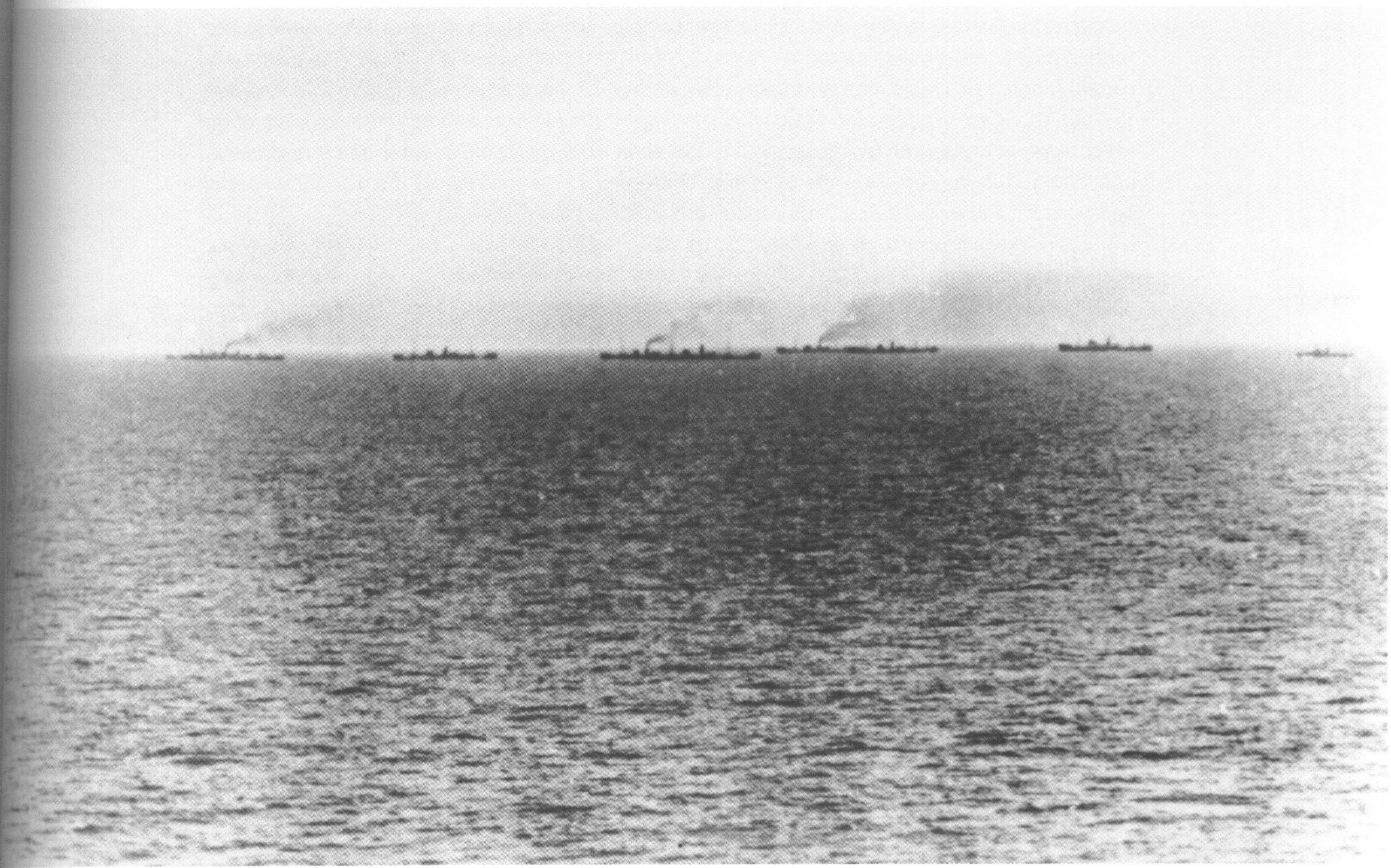
Edmund Berthold Daser was born in Augsburg on 1 October 1910 and began flying training in March 1932. It would appear he then joined the new *Luftwaffe* in 1935, becoming an Officer Cadet in April 1936 before being posted to II./KG 154 at Wunsdorf in October of that year, this unit being re-designated II./KG 157 *Boelcke* on 1 March 1937. By the end of that year, the experienced Daser had been promoted to *Oberleutnant*.

It is believed that on 1 March 1939, Daser was posted to the Focke-Wulf factory at Bremen as a pilot assisting in the development of the Focke-Wulf 200 for military purposes. When the war began, Daser remained with Focke-Wulf until he was posted to the newly formed 1./KG 40 in April 1940, by which time he had been promoted to *Hauptmann*. Precise details of his operational flights are not known but he was particularly successful in operations in the north of Norway. He was rapidly awarded for his efforts - the EK II was awarded 5 May 1940, EK I 28 June 1940 and on 20 July 1940, he was made *Staffel Kapitän* of 1./KG 40 following the death on operations of *Hptm* Roman Steszin that same day.

By the end of 1940, Daser had been credited with sinking in the region of 46,000 BRT of enemy shipping and for this, on 21 January 1941, he was awarded the *Ritterkreuz;* 10 days later he was credited with sinking the 5,159 BRT *Rowanbank*; there were no survivors from its 68 man crew. He was awarded the *Frontflugspange in Gold* on 27 May 1941 and then on 2 August 1941, was given command of I./KG 40 following the death over the Atlantic of fellow *Ritterkreuzträger Hptm* Fritz Fliegel on 18 July. Daser remained as *Gruppen Kommandeur* until 16 December 1942 by which time he had been promoted to *Major* and had been awarded the *Deutsches Kreuz in Gold* on 25 June 1942.

It is believed that Daser did not fly again operationally and that he spent the rest of the war as *Kommandeur* of the *Erprobungsstelle* at Rechlin.

Two highly decorated members of I./KG 40 stand together here in full dress uniforms. They are Gruppen Kommandeure, Hauptmann Edmund Daser and Geschwader Kommodore, Maj. Edgar Petersen. Note the Narvik badges on their left upper arms and Mission Clasps above their upper left tunic pockets.



ABOVE: A photograph taken from a Fw 200 Condor of I./KG 40 in October 1941 of a British convoy. By the time this photograph was taken, offensive operations by the Condor had to be restricted to shadowing convoys etc. due to the increasing numbers of merchant ships being equipped with anti-aircraft guns, in the summer of 1941 and the introduction of catapult merchant ships (CAM) by the Royal Navy. This latter development involved a Hurricane being catapulted from the forward bows of the merchant ship when the enemy aircraft was sighted. Its major drawback was the fact that the Hurricane had to be ditched in the sea alongside an Allied vessel in order for the pilot to be – hopefully – picked up after the engagement. Nevertheless the Condors suffered with the first loss to the CAM ships on 3 August 1941 when an aircraft of I./KG 40 was shot down by Lt. Everett flying from HMS Maplin.

> *"I was a young temporary probationary Sub Lt RNVR and served on HMS Audacity, Britain's first escort carrier on Atlantic convoy protection in 1941. After a short but highly successful operational tour, the Audacity was torpedoed and sunk on 21 December 1941. Four FW 200 Condors and one probable were accounted for as well as a number of U-boats spotted by Audacity's Wildcats and despatched by the convoy's escort group. Certainly Admiral Dönitz was not best pleased with us and wrote in his diary: 'In Convoy HG 76, the worse feature from our viewpoint was the presence of the aircraft carrier Audacity. 1941 came to an end in an atmosphere of worry and anxiety for U-boat Command...'"*

Only three downed Condors can be attributed to aircraft flying from HMS *Audacity.* On 21 September 1941, during Convoy OG 74, Sub Lieuts Norris Patterson and Graham Fletcher of 802 Squadron shot down the Condor flown by *Lt* Georg Schaffranek of 3./KG 40; there were no survivors when the Condor's tail was shot off in the initial attack. The next victim occurred on 8 November 1941 during Convoy OG 76 when Eric Brown shot down the Condor flown by *Oblt* Karl Krüger of 3. *Staffel*; again, there were no survivors. The last confirmed kill occurred just two days before the sinking of the *Audacity* by U-571 commanded by *Kaptlt* Gerhard Bigalke as Sub Lieut 'Jimmy' Sleigh later reported:

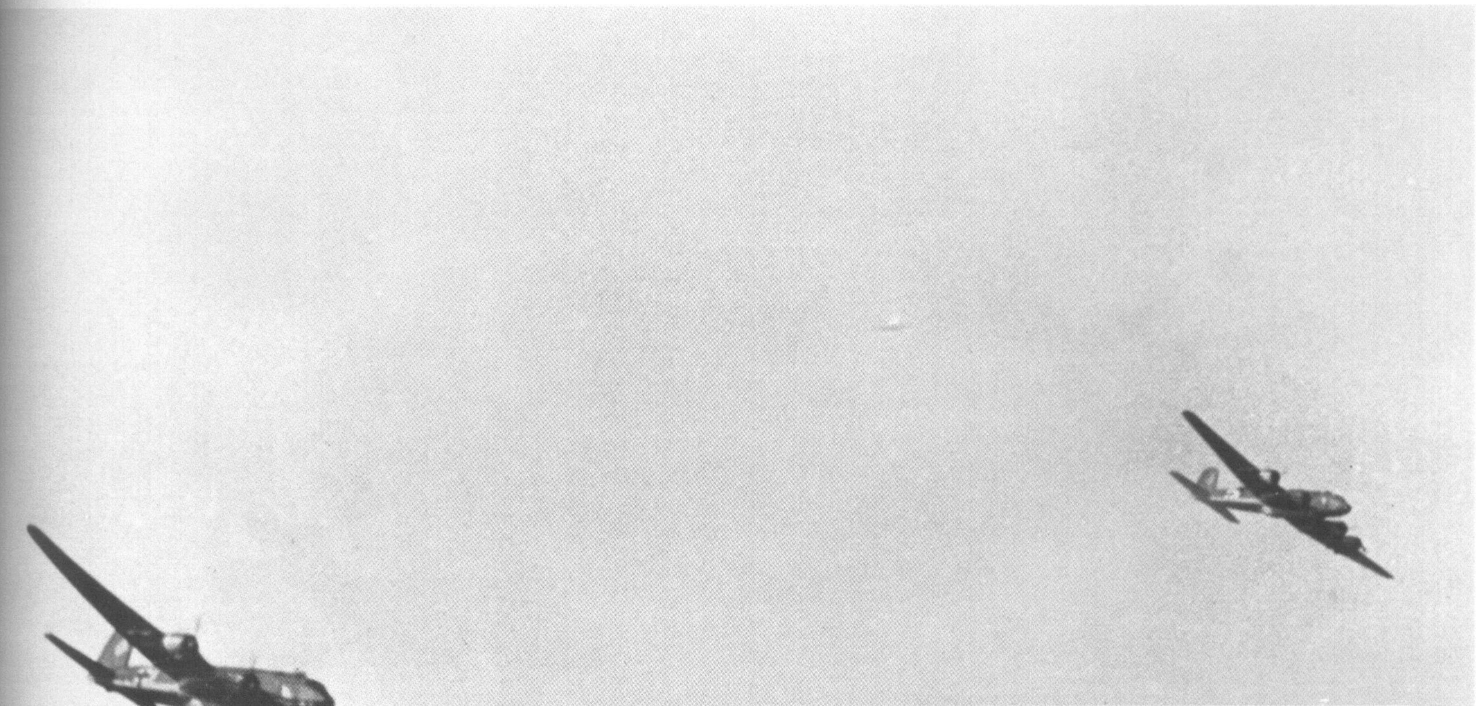
> *"A Condor was sighted by a lookout to the east of the convoy about 15 miles away on the port quarter flying at a very low level. Two Wildcats were scrambled at around 1130 hours – myself and Bertie Williams my Number 2. Weather was clear with broken cloud. The Condor was on*

> *a course for France, having no doubt turned for home when the carrier was seen turning into wind. A long chase ensued as the Wildcats did not have much speed advantage. We eventually caught it some 60 miles later and then took another 40 miles to shoot it down! This was due to a gun stoppage – after our first quarter attacks, all guns in both aircraft jammed, a situation which was normally rectified by re-cocking the guns from the cockpit. After much re-cocking, only one gun in my aircraft could be made to fire and in the meantime, the Condor was still hell bent for home, flying at 20 feet above the water.*
>
> *"I decided to have a go at a head-on attack – the Condor was about 30 feet above the sea by now and I was at 10 feet. It took another 20 miles to get into position and at closing speed of about 500 knots opened fire with my one gun at maximum range. Ten seconds later, the Condor burst into flames and I turned upwards, collecting in the process a stub aerial and 30 feet of Condor wire which got caught up in the aircraft's arrestor hook. If the Condor had not taken avoiding action, I would have missed him. After the attack, the Condor ditched and settled into the water and I saw one man climb out onto the wings and he waved."*

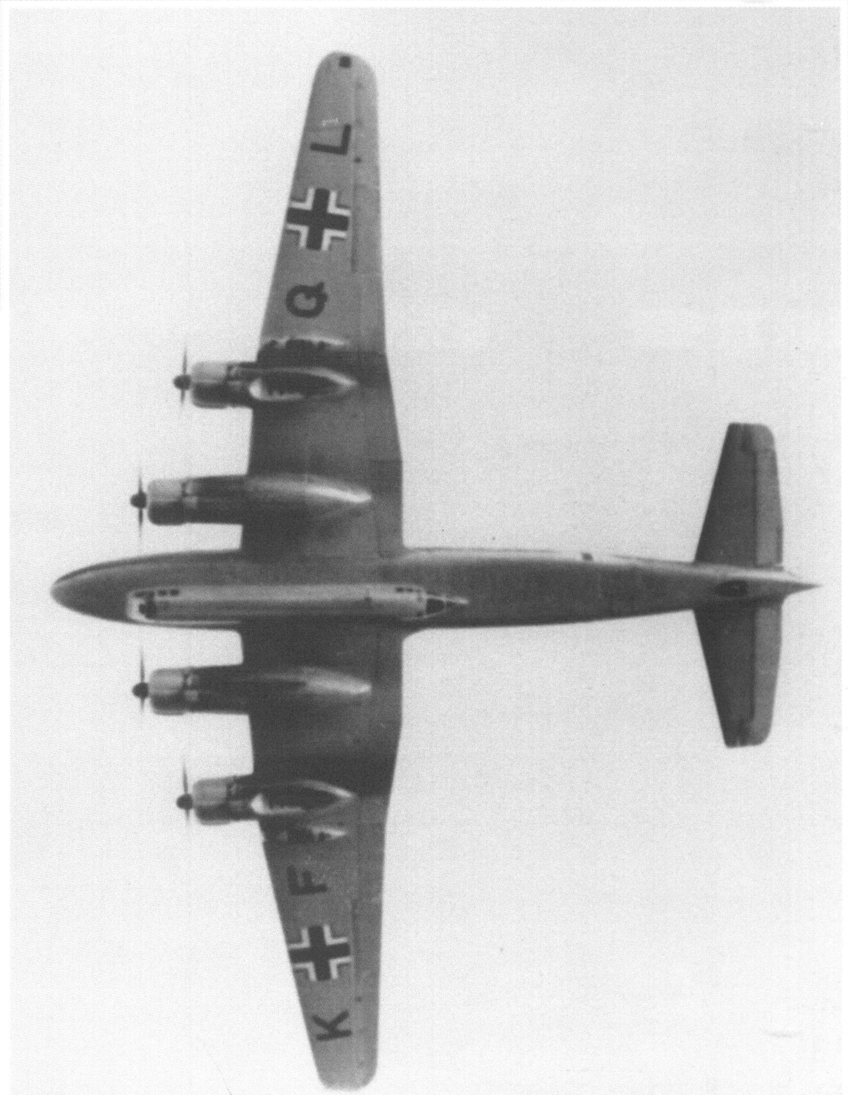
There were no survivors from *Oblt* Hans-Joachim Hase's crew and again the Condor came from 3./KG 40.

The use of escort carriers was a great concern to both the *Luftwaffe* and the *Kriegsmarine* as the maritime air war both in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic began to escalate. With Britain now being supported by the USA, which entered the war on 7 December 1941, new weapons and tactics on both sides would have considerable bearing for the next three and a half years of what was now 'total war'.

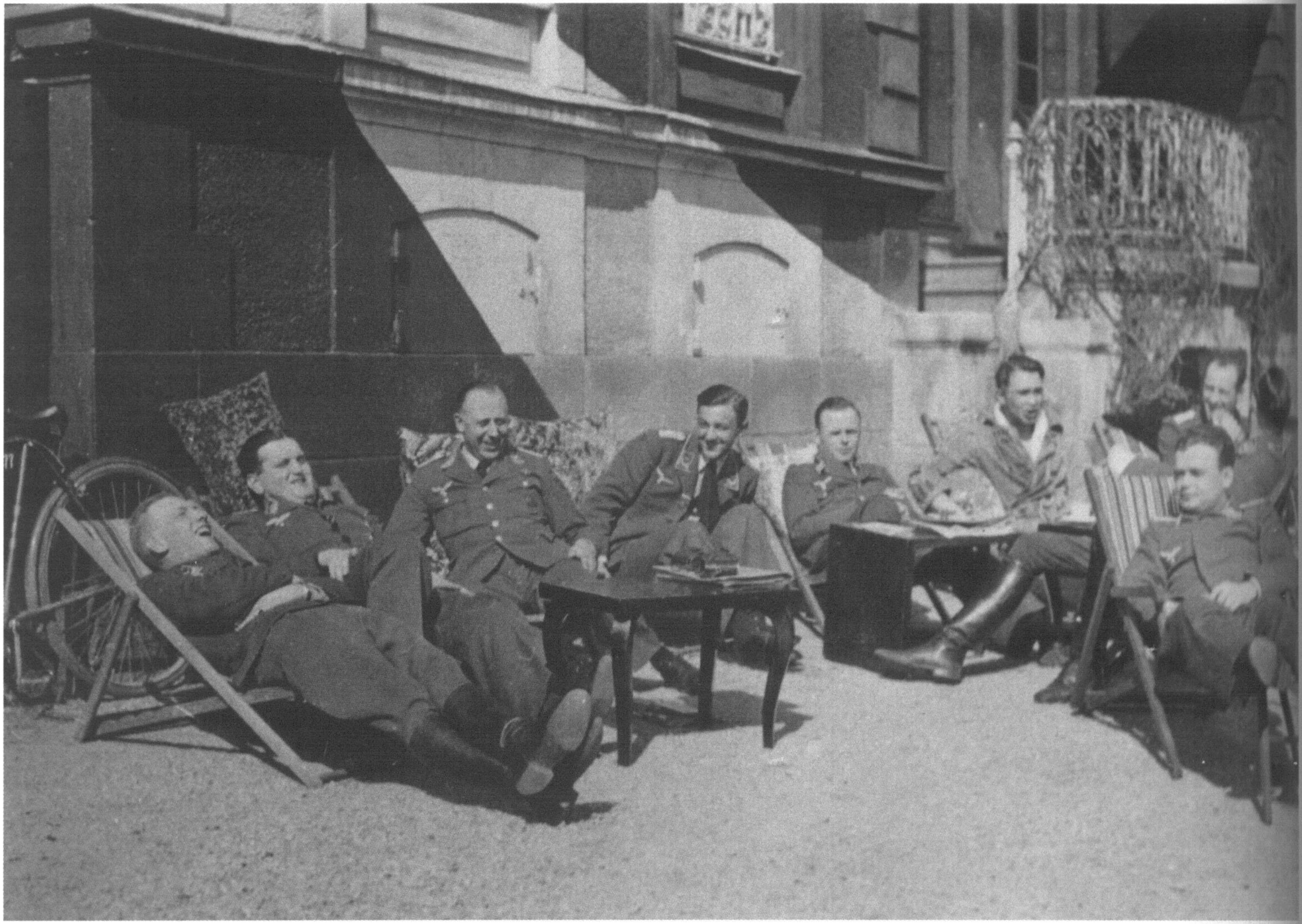
BELOW: Two Fw 200 Condors cruise over the wintery and inhospitable terrain of Northern Iceland.

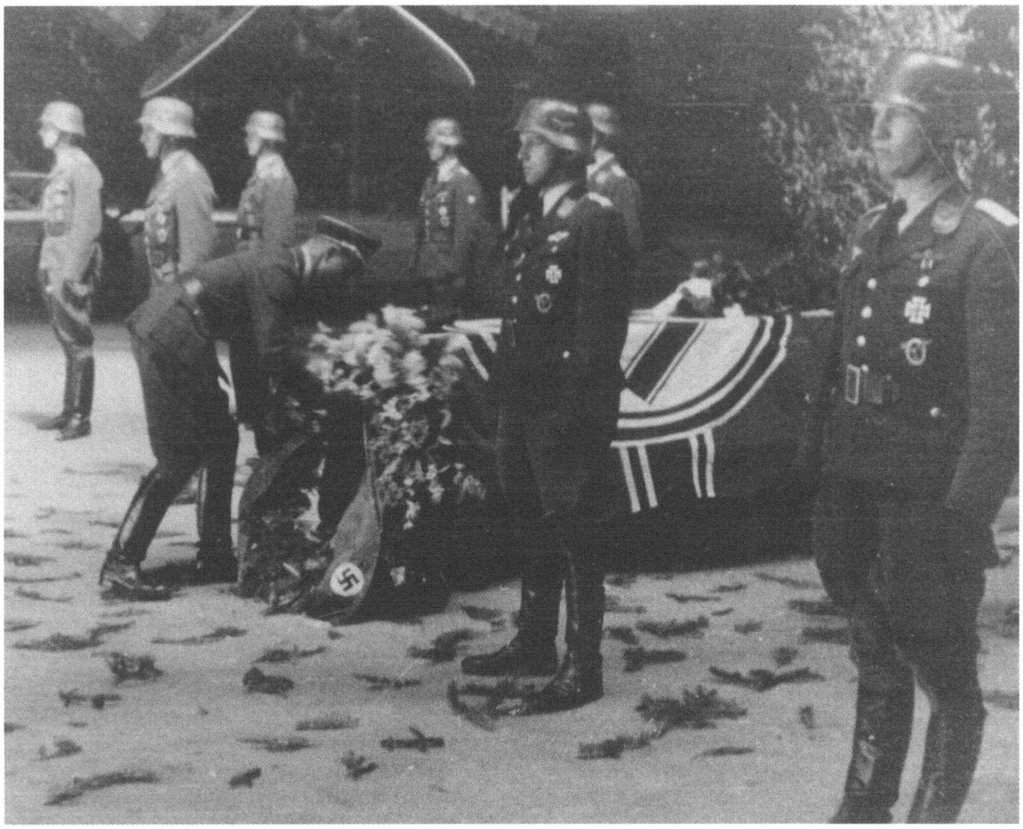


BOVE: Rarely photographed in the air together, two ocke-Wulf Fw 200 Condors Cs of I./KG 40 bank together n the sky in September 1941.



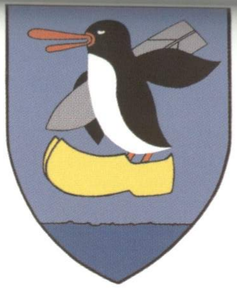
IGHT: Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor C-3/U4, W.Nr. 0026, oded KF+QL and subsequently coded F8+CH of I./KG 40 ver-flies the camera. Built in 1940, it was lost on operations ith all crew near Ireland on 24 July 1941.



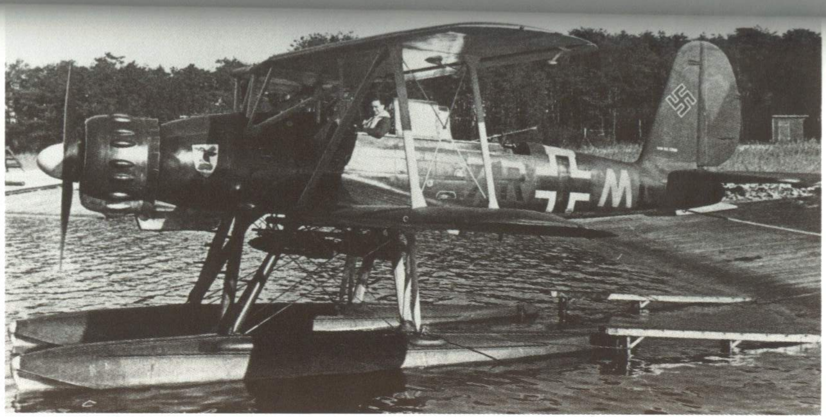


ABOVE: Crews of I./KG 28 relax in the sun in 1941. Leutnant Wilhelm Neumann is second from left. As KGr 126 it was originally part of IX. Fliegerkorps and was re-designated I./KG 28 in December 1940 under the command of Hauptmann Dr Roman Auernig. It undertook 'special duties', including cutting barrage balloon cables with specially equipped He 111s, experimental torpedo combat operations as well as conventional mining operations before switching to attacks on mainland Britain. In December 1941 it was again re-designated as III./KG 26 and ended up conducting conventional bombing missions on the Russian Front.

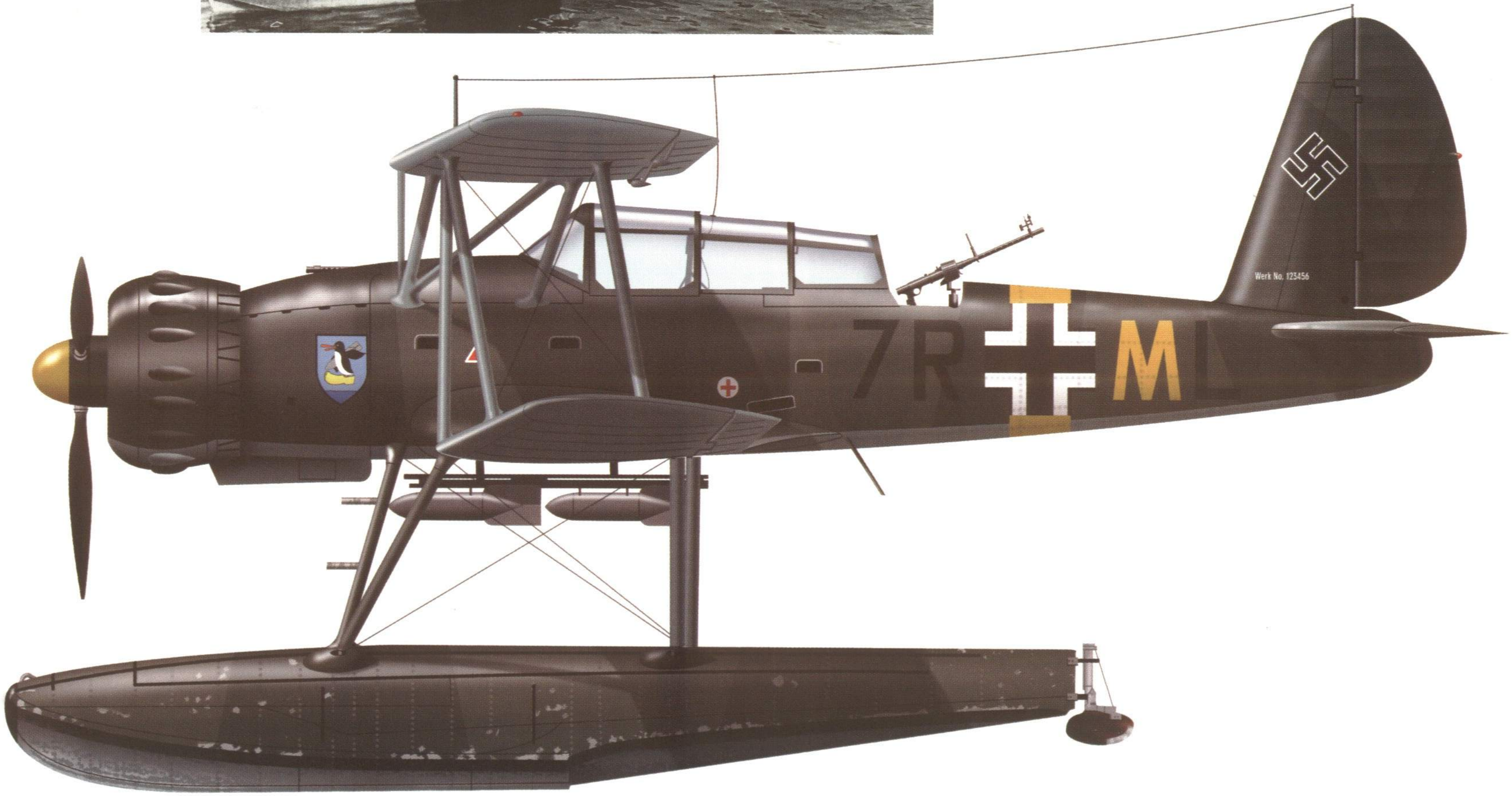
LEFT: The burial of Leutnant Gerd Tocha of 3./KG 28. During an attack on a ship north-east of Trevose Head, Cornwall, Tocha, the pilot, was killed by machine gun fire. His He 111 H-4, W. Nr. 3286, coded 1T+HL crash-landed back at Nantes. From left to right: Leutnant Rainer Voss, Leutnant Hans Arber (+14 Jun 1941), Maj iG Franz Boehme (Gruppen Kommandeur), Leutnant Wilhelm Neumann (POW 25 June 1941) and Leutnant Ernst Thiele (POW 18 July 1941).



Emblem of
3./SAGr.125

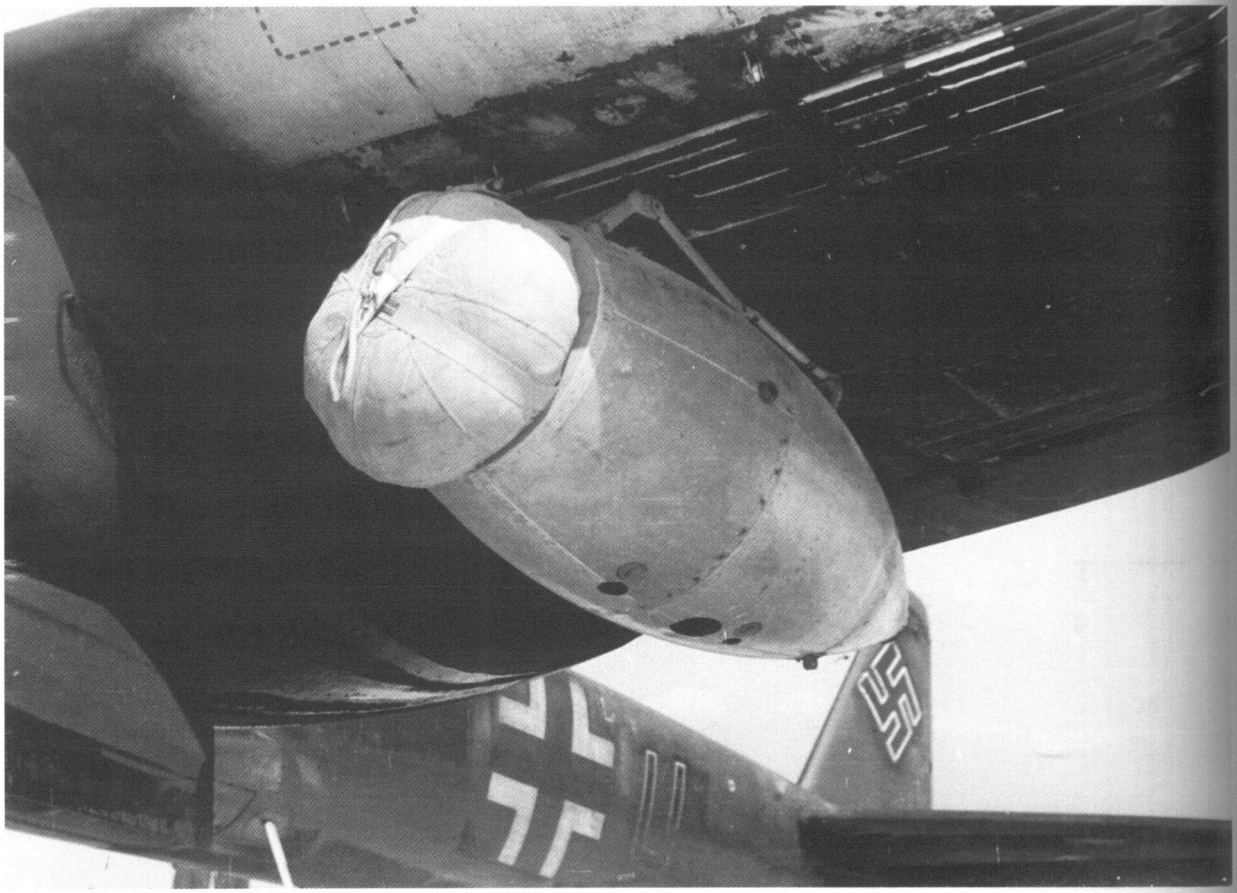


LEFT: Although most seaplane missions were carried out by the Küstenfliegergruppen, much of the coastal reconnaisance operations were carried out by the Aufklärungsgruppen, flying smaller float planes. This Arado Ar 95 A-1, W.Nr. 952350, of 3./SAGr.125 is moored somewhere along the Baltic coast in the summer of 1941. Very few of these aircraft were operated by the Luftwaffe and were handed over gradually to Estonian volunteers who flew them until 1944. This machine has been fitted with two SC 50 bombs for use against minor maritime targets close to the coast.

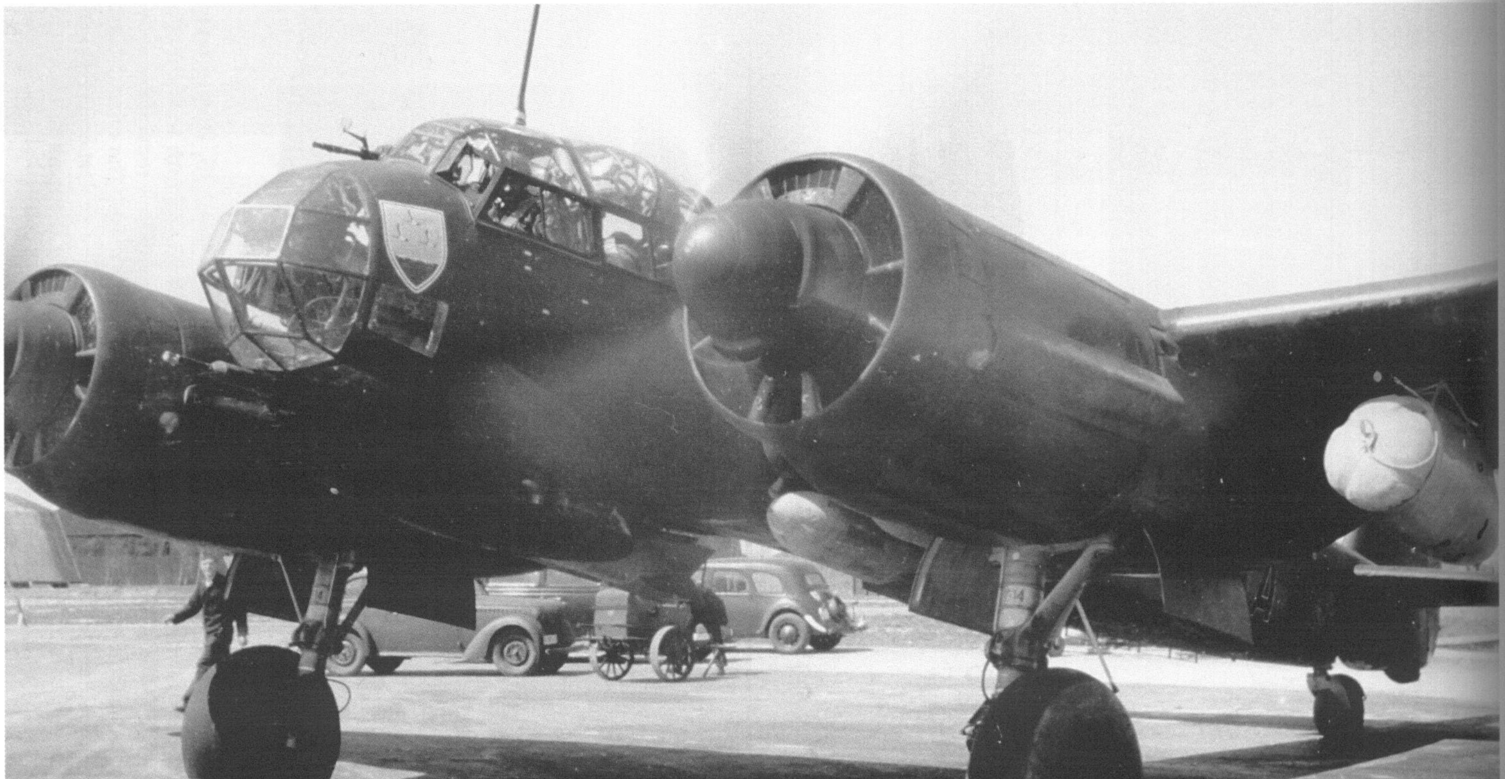


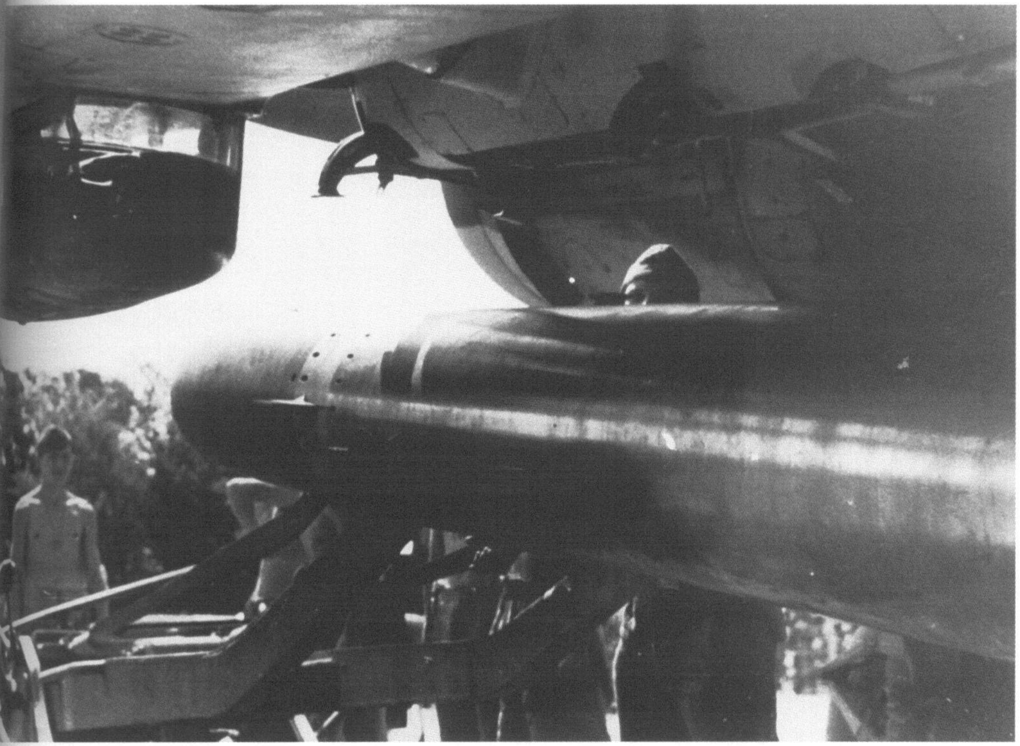
Arado Ar 95 A-1, W.Nr. 952350, 7R+ML of 3./SAGr.125, Baltic coast, 1941
Camouflaged in the standard splinter pattern of RLM 72/73 with RLM 65 light blue underneath, this Ar 95 A-1, W.Nr. 952350 was coded 7R+ML of 3./SAGr.125. Although this machine belonged to a reconnaissance unit it was also able to carry out limited offensive action with the two SC 50 bombs it could carry under the fuselage. The code 7R+ML was painted on the side of the fuselage in black except for the individual aircraft letter 'M' which was painted in the Staffel colour of yellow. The letter 'M' appears to be the template of the letter 'W' which has been turned upside down. The propeller tip appears to be in white, the Gruppe colour. The unit badge depicting a penguin standing in a clog carrying a bomb, is painted on the nose.

RIGHT: A close-up of the Walter rocket-assisted take-off engine mounted below the wing of a Ju 88 S4+UL of 3./KG 506. This aircraft has its individual letter outlined in yellow.

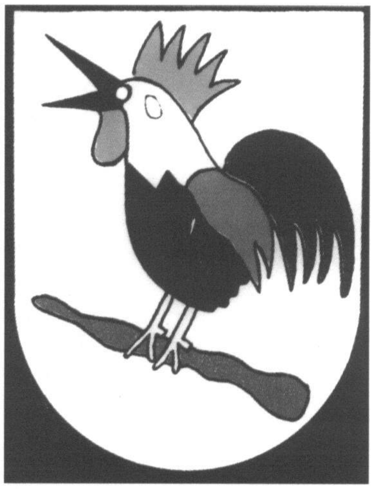


BELOW: A Ju 88 A-4 coded S4+AH belonging to 1./KGr 506, with Walter 109-500 rocket engines mounted beneath each wing, carries the unit's badge of three black and white oystercatchers flying above a medium blue sea on a pale blue shield. Kampfgruppe 506 was formed from the coastal reconnaissance unit Küstenfliegergruppe 506 on 19 October 1941 although it had exchanged its He 115 floatplanes for Ju 88s at Perleberg in March. Its first Kommandeur was Obstlt. Walter Schwarz.



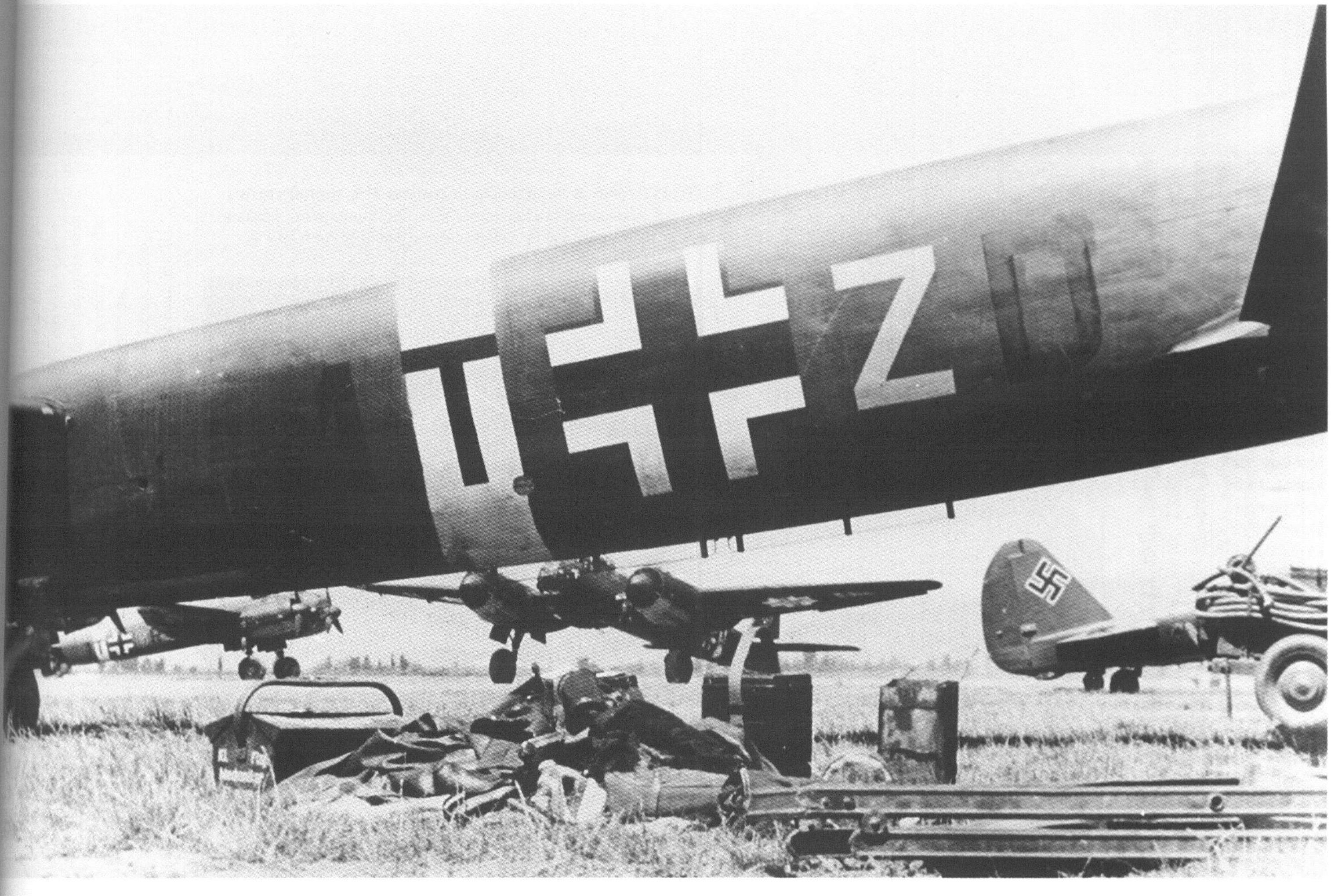


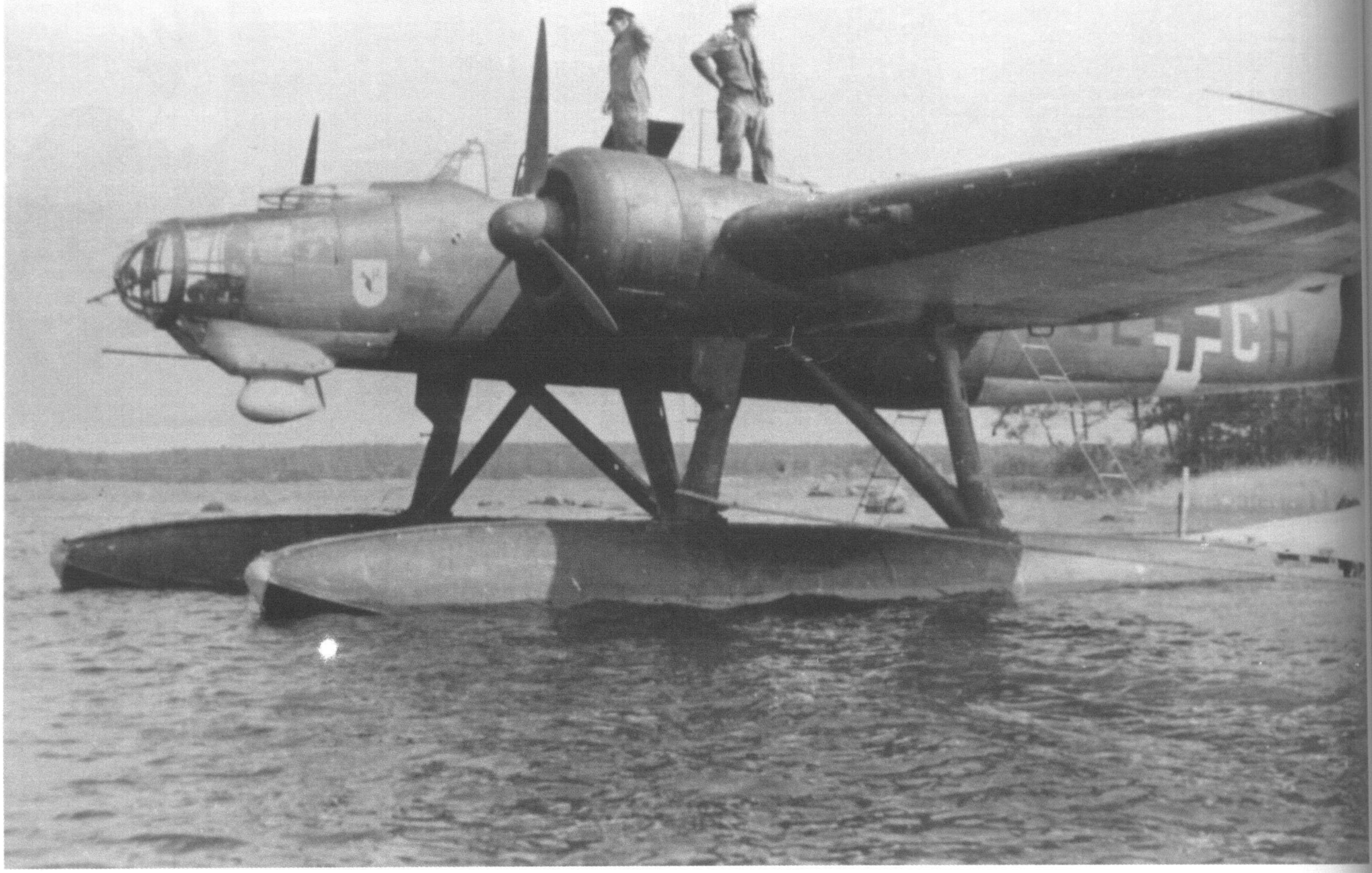
LEFT: To assist Luftwaffe mechanics load heavy torpedoes aboard the racks of its aircraft, in this case a Ju 88, special hydraulic trucks were used.



ABOVE: The emblem of Kü.Fl.Gr 606, named after Oberleutenant Joachim Hahn, the Gruppen Kommandeur. Hahn being the German word for cockerel.

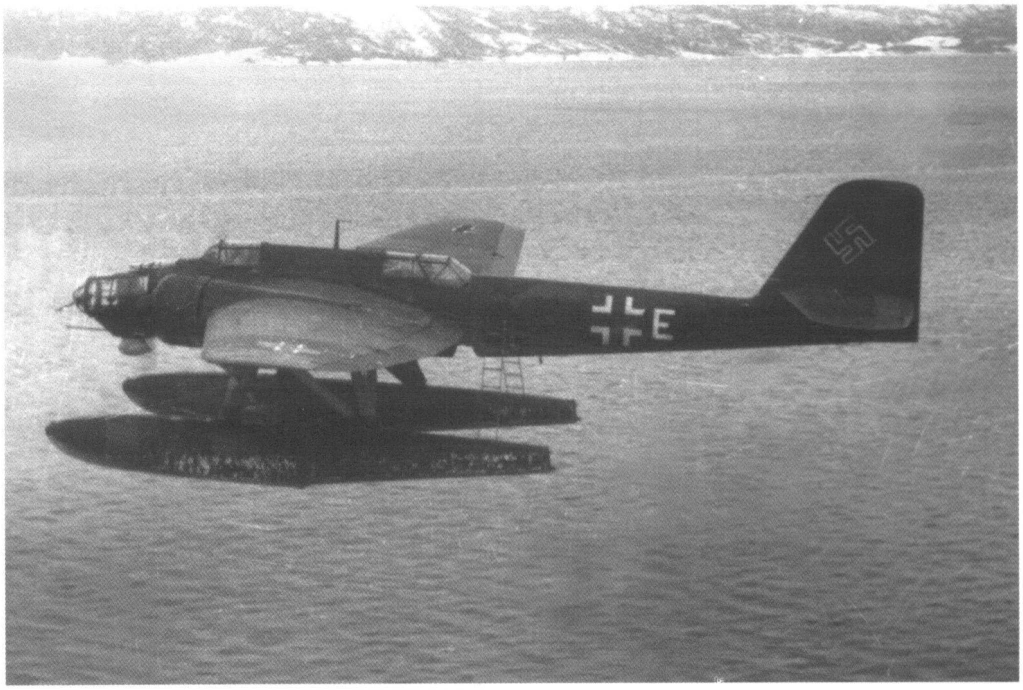
BELOW: The code '1T' was originally allocated to the specialist minelaying Gruppe, KGr 126. In December 1940, this unit was redesignated I./KG 28, becoming the third III./KG 26 on 15 December 1941. Shortly after this, it re-equipped with the Ju 88 A-4 and transferred to the Mediterranean Theatre. It still retained the '1T' code for a short time as can be seen in this photograph of 1T+ZD of the III. Gruppe Stab of KG 26.The individual letter 'Z' was probably painted bright green (RLM 25).





ABOVE: Heinkel He 115 C-1 coded 8L+CH of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 906 at its mooring in Finland. The aircraft carries the Staffel emblem of a small singing bird against a light coloured background. Note the lower wing leading edge and under fuselage centre section which appear to be painted in a dark colour possibly matt black.

RIGHT: A He 115 C-1, of Kü.Fl.Gr 906 flies low over the waters off the Norwegian coast. Note the first two digits of the fuselage code appear to be overpainted. However in all likelihood it is 8L+EH.



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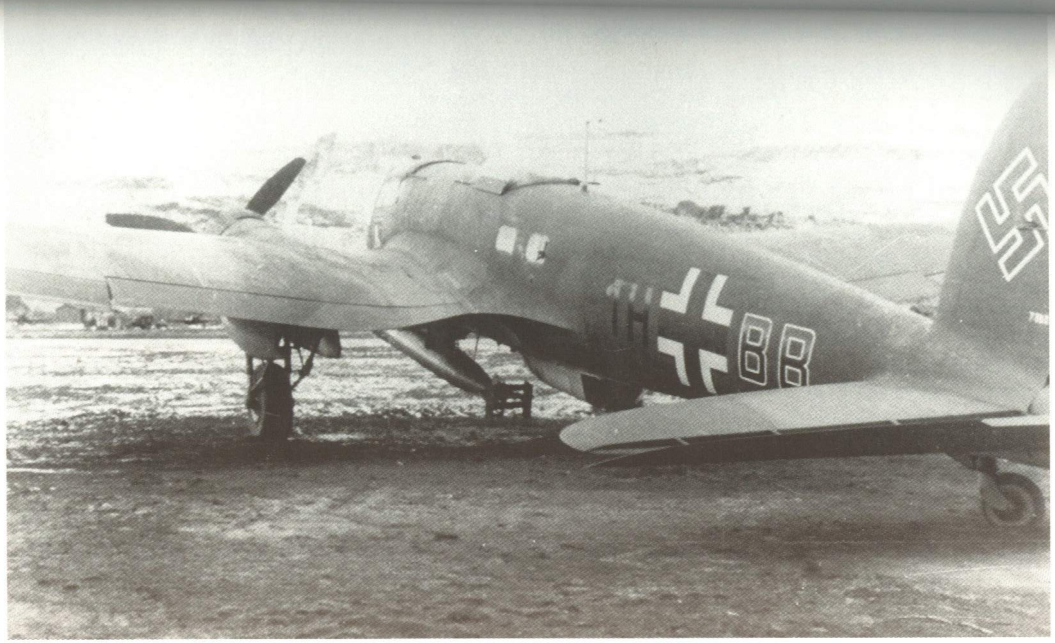
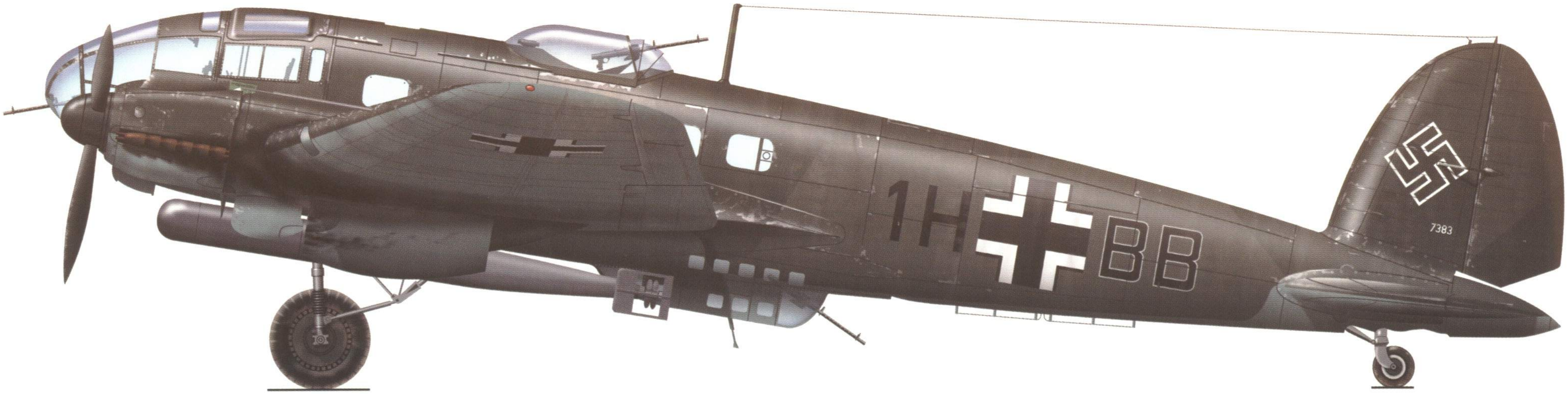
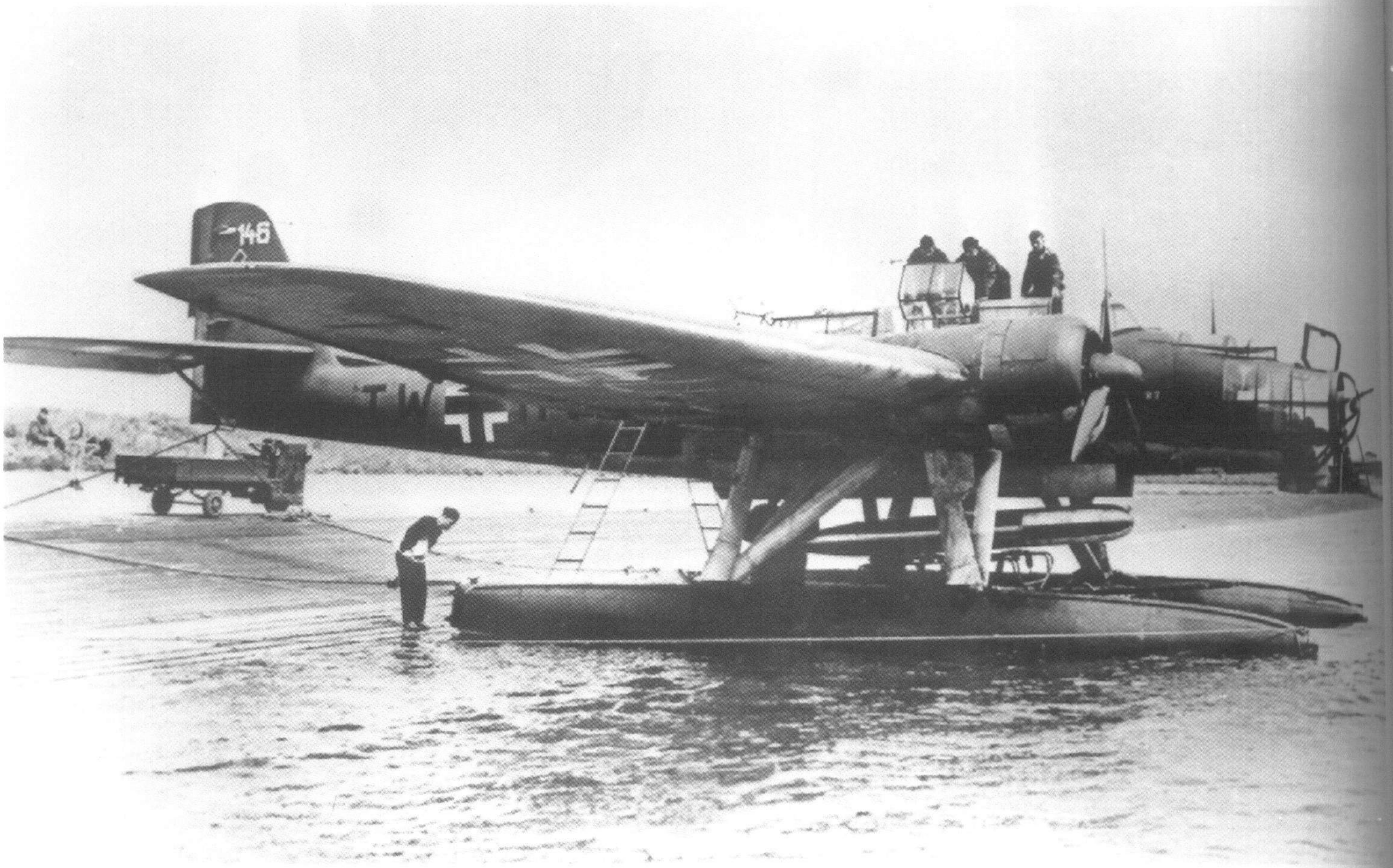
RIGHT: Rear view of 1H+BB, an He 111 H of Stab I./KG 26, probably seen circa late 1941/1942. It is probably because the aircraft belonged to the Gruppe's Staff Flight that the two last letters of the aircraft code have been outlined in white as the standard practice was to outline (or colour) only the third letter, which was the individual aircraft letter. Note also that while the Balkenkreuz on the fuselage has the usual black centre, this has been omitted from the Hakenkreuz on the tail.





Heinkel He 111 H-6, 1H+BB, of Stab I./KG 26, late 1941

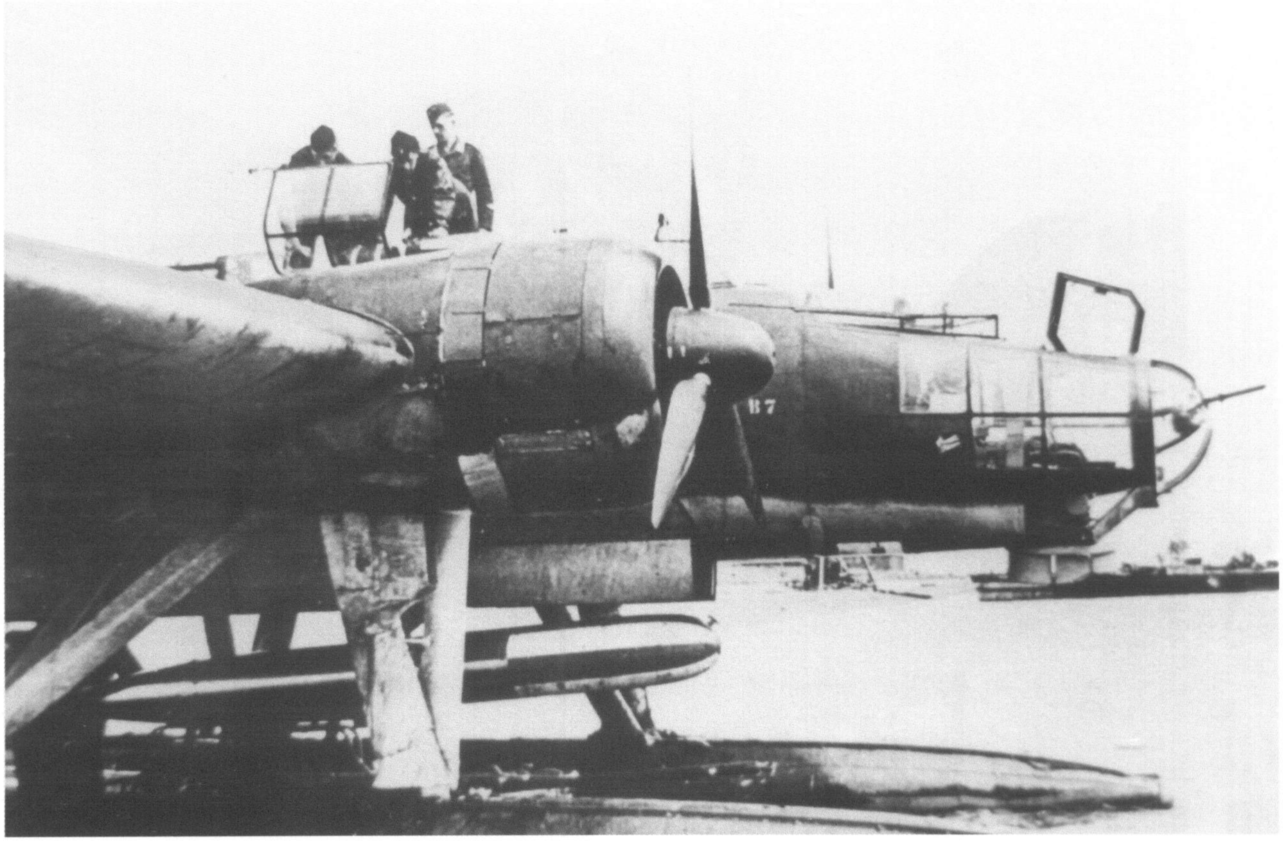
This He 111 H-6, W.Nr. 7383 was coded 1H+BB. The aircraft was camouflaged in the standard splinter pattern in the upper surface colours of RLM 70/71 with RLM 65 underneath. The last two letters behind the fuselage Balkenkreuz have been outlined in white. The KG 26 badge of a lion on a shield with the inscription 'Vestigium Leonis' was painted on the nose with the background colour of the shield painted green, the Stab colour.

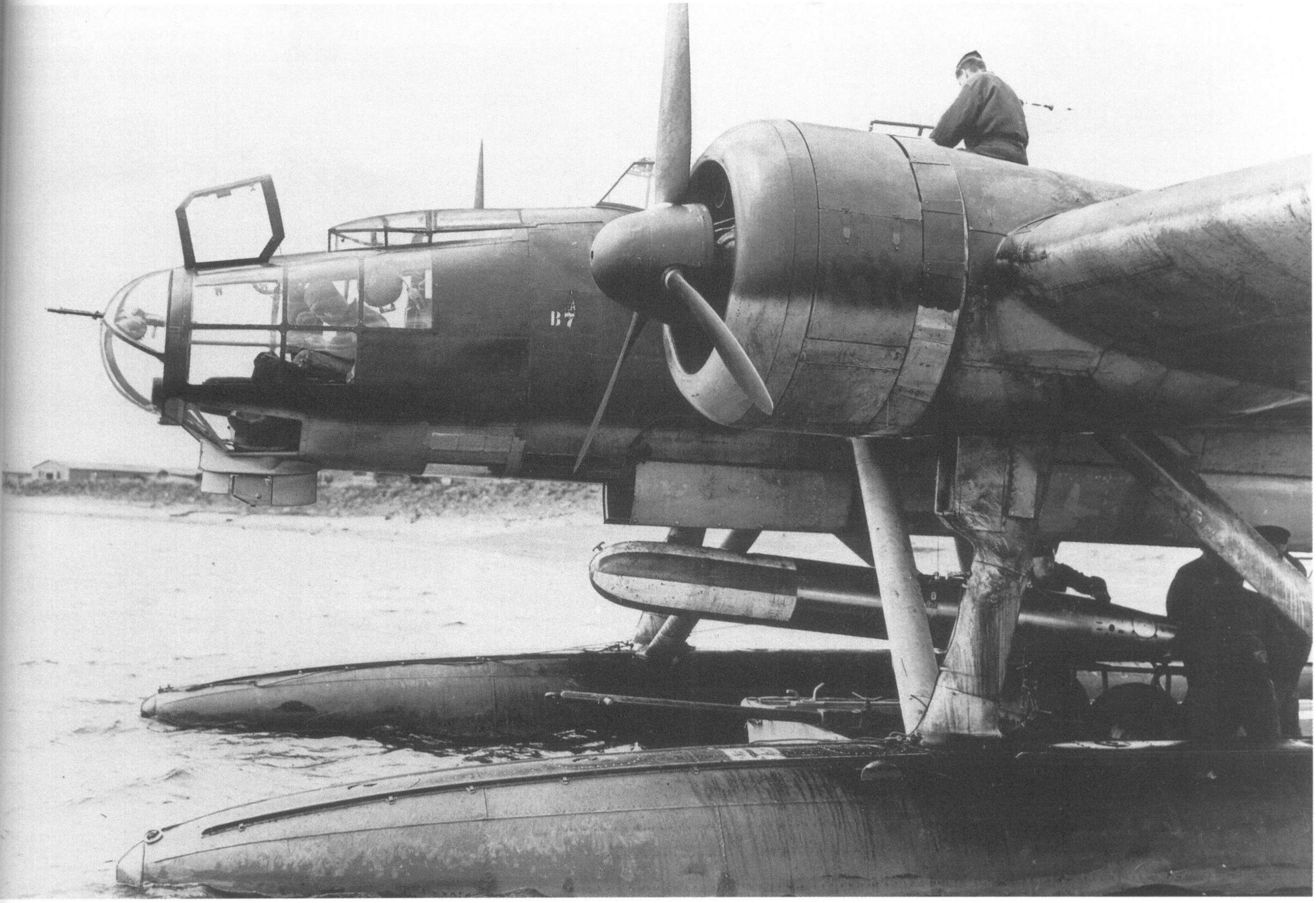


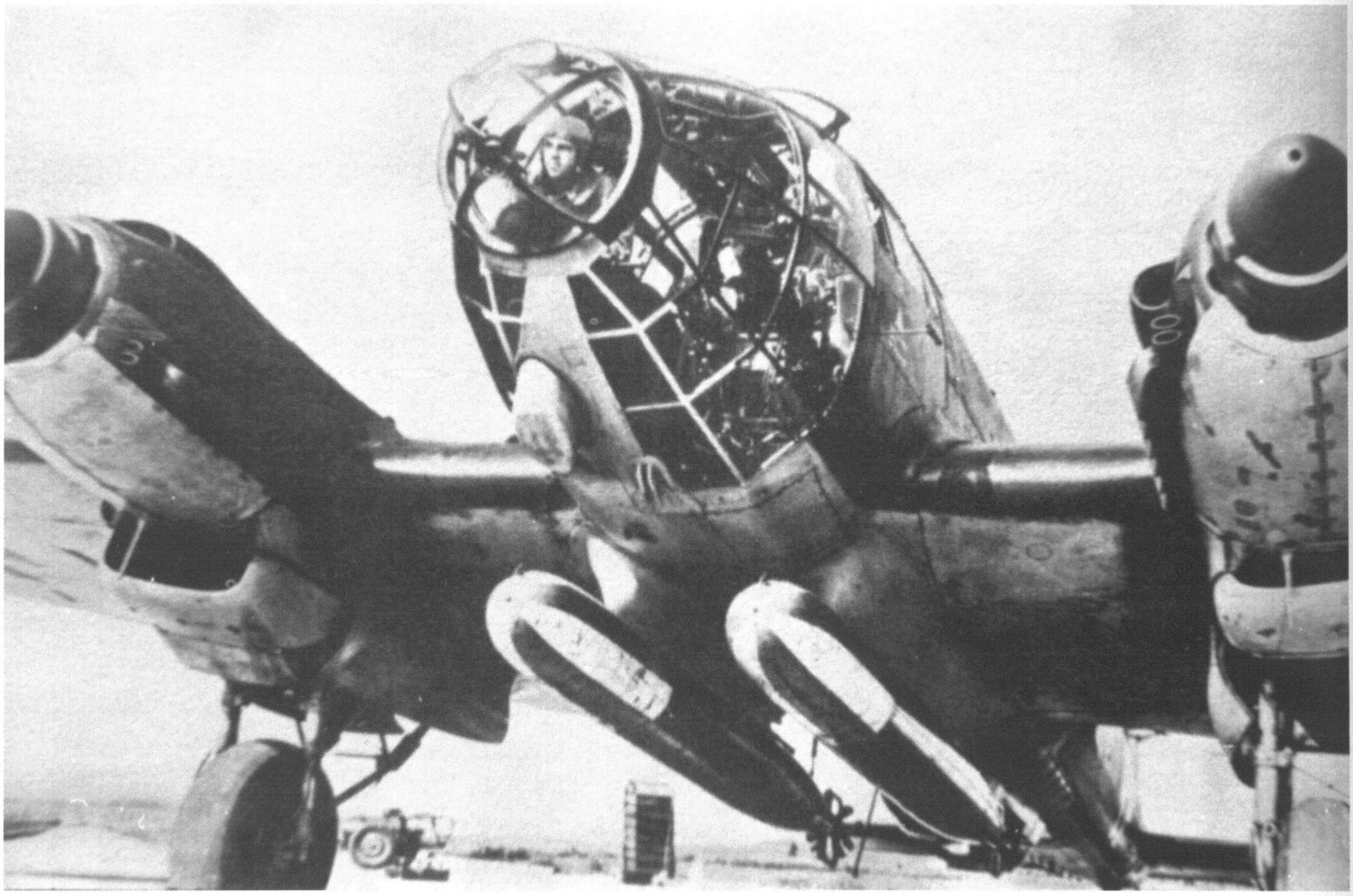
146
TW

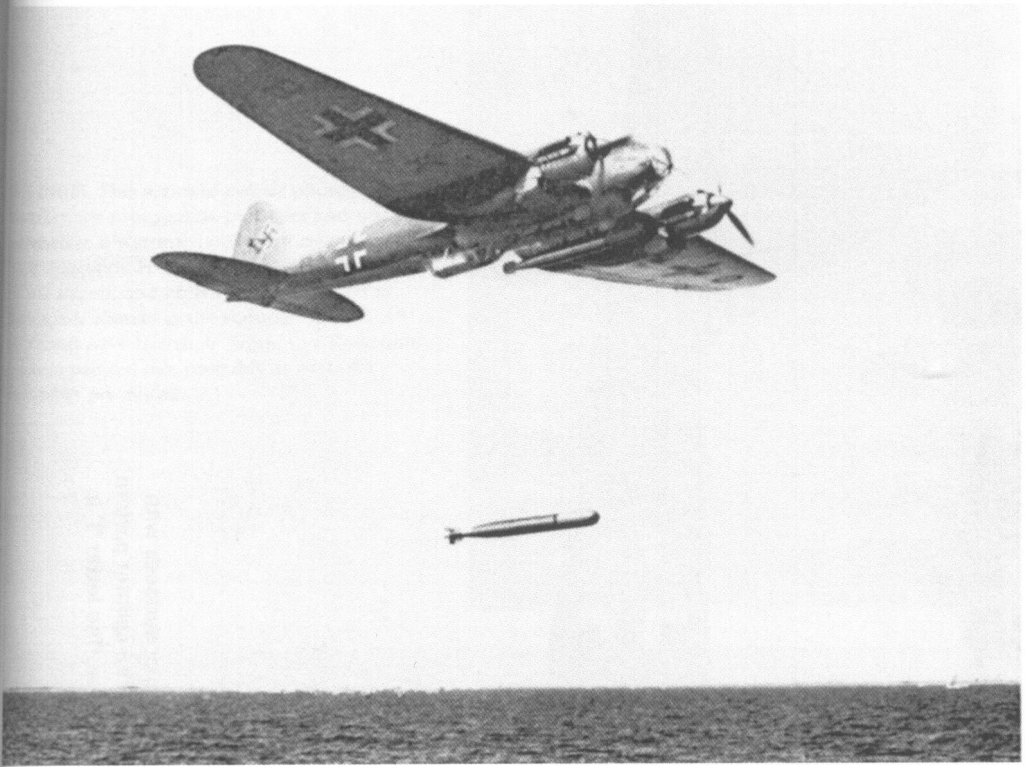
146

THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: A practice torpedo is loaded into the weapons bay of this He 115 B-1 coded TW+H?, probably at the Grossenbrode Torpedo School in the summer of 1941. Note the three-digit number in white above the Hakenkreuz on the tail fin possibly denoting the last three digits of the Werknummer or denoting the number of a test aircraft. The warheads of practice torpedoes were often marked with distinctive red and white bands to aid observation of behaviour during launch. In this sequence of photographs the torpedo has been towed to the slipway and is loaded into the bomb bay via a pontoon.

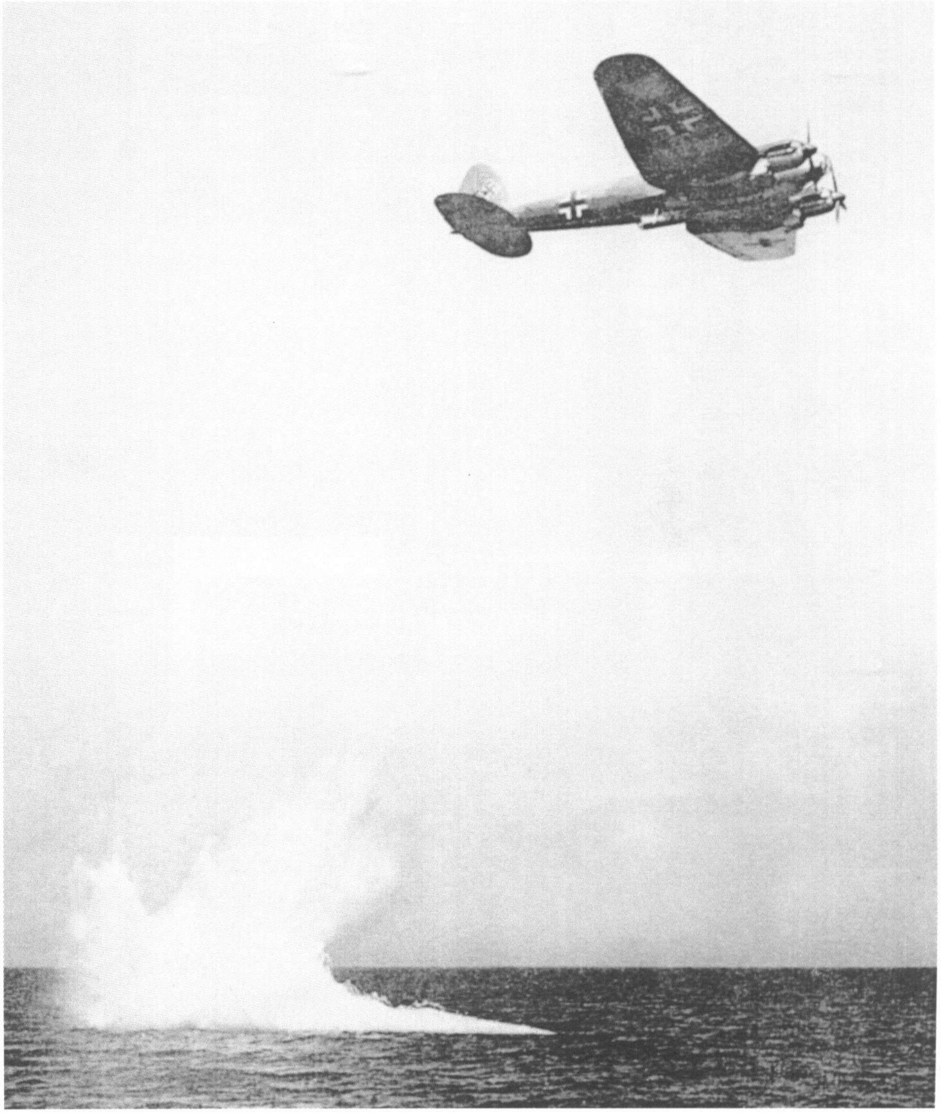








THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: A series of photographs showing He 111 H-4 or H-5, BK+CO, W.Nr. 3891 during the first airborne torpedo tests with the practice LT F5B torpedoes on PVC fuselage racks at the Luftwaffe's torpedo school at Grossenbrode on the Baltic coast. The photographs were first published in the Luftwaffe magazine 'Der Adler' in the second half of 1941.



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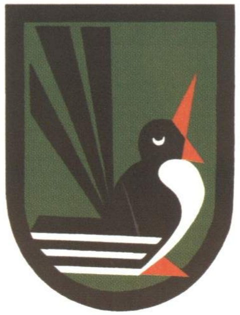
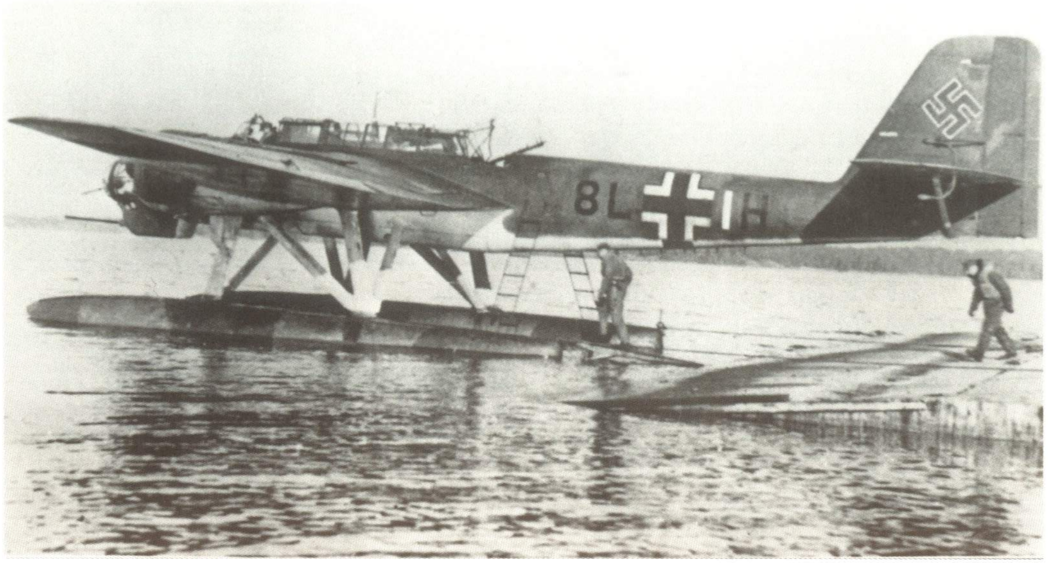
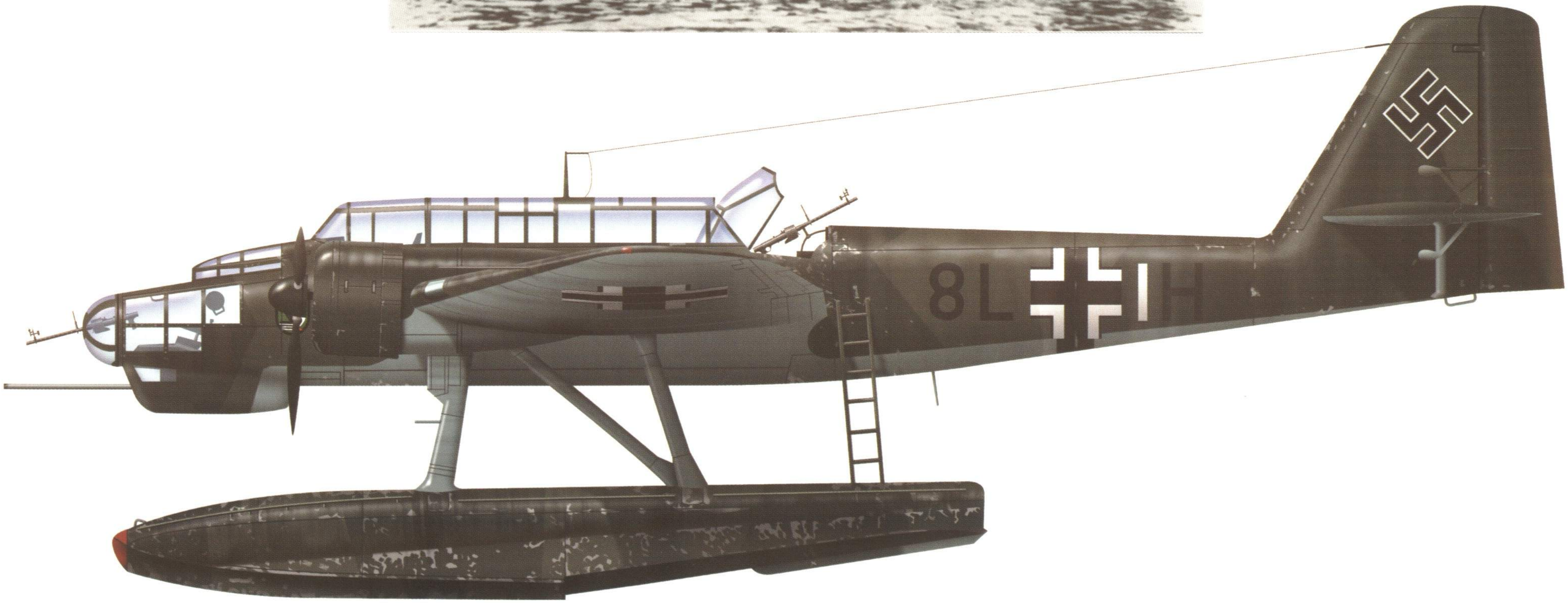


Emblem of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 906



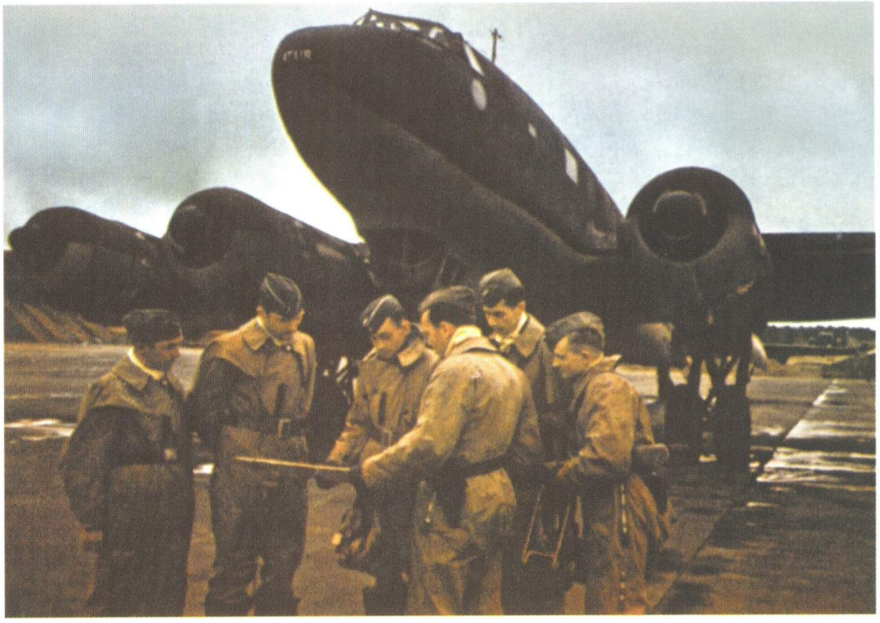
LEFT: The pilot of this He 115 C-1, coded 8L+IH of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 906, in a Finnish location in late 1942 is already seated in his cockpit with the engines running as the other crew members make their way on board. Note the MG 151/20 cannon fitted on the port underside of the nose.

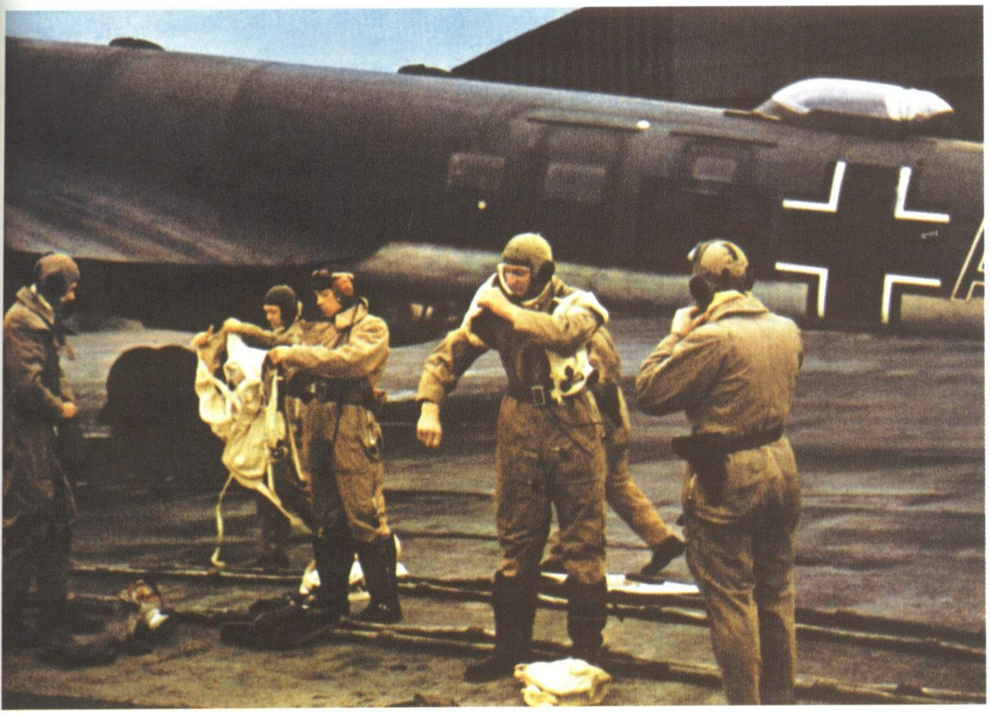


Heinkel He 115 C-1, 8L+IH, of 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 906, Finland, 1942

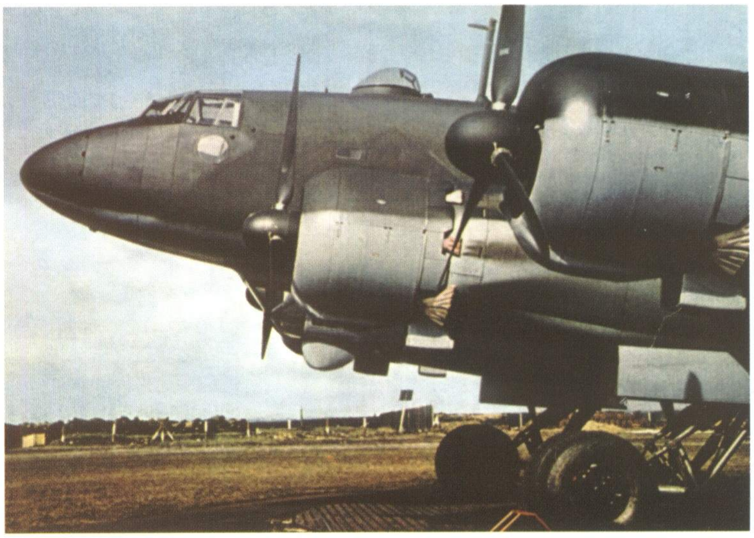
This aircraft coded 8L+IH was camouflaged in the standard splinter pattern of RLM 72/73 on the upper surfaces with RLM 65 pale blue underneath. The Werknummner on the lower part of the fin was painted in white. The splinter pattern is also clearly visible on the floats which were probably also painted in 65 pale blue on the undersides. The letter 'I' is painted in the Staffel colour white.

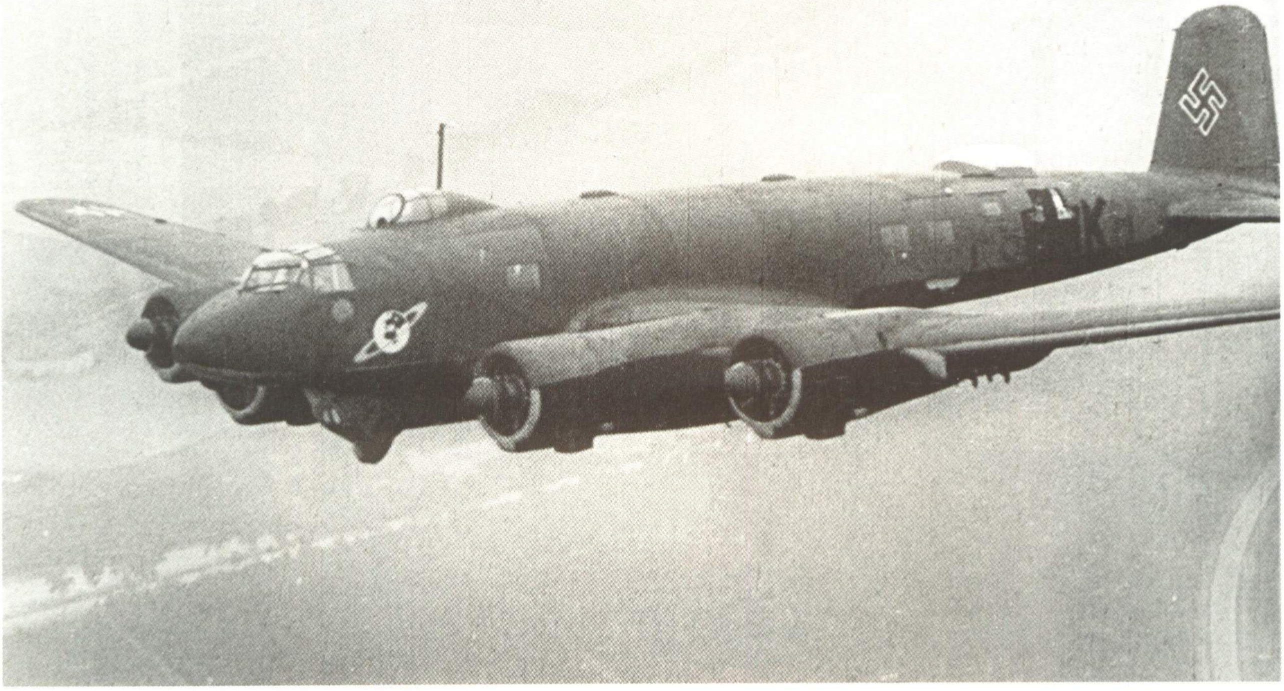
THIS PAGE: This series of colour photographs was taken for propaganda purposes and was published in a wartime book on the Luftwaffe called 'Fliegende Front'. The photographs show Fw 200 aircraft and crews of KG 40 based at Bordeaux-Merignac in the summer of 1941. All the aircraft have had their 'World in a Ring' unit emblems painted out, probably as part of a censorship precaution.



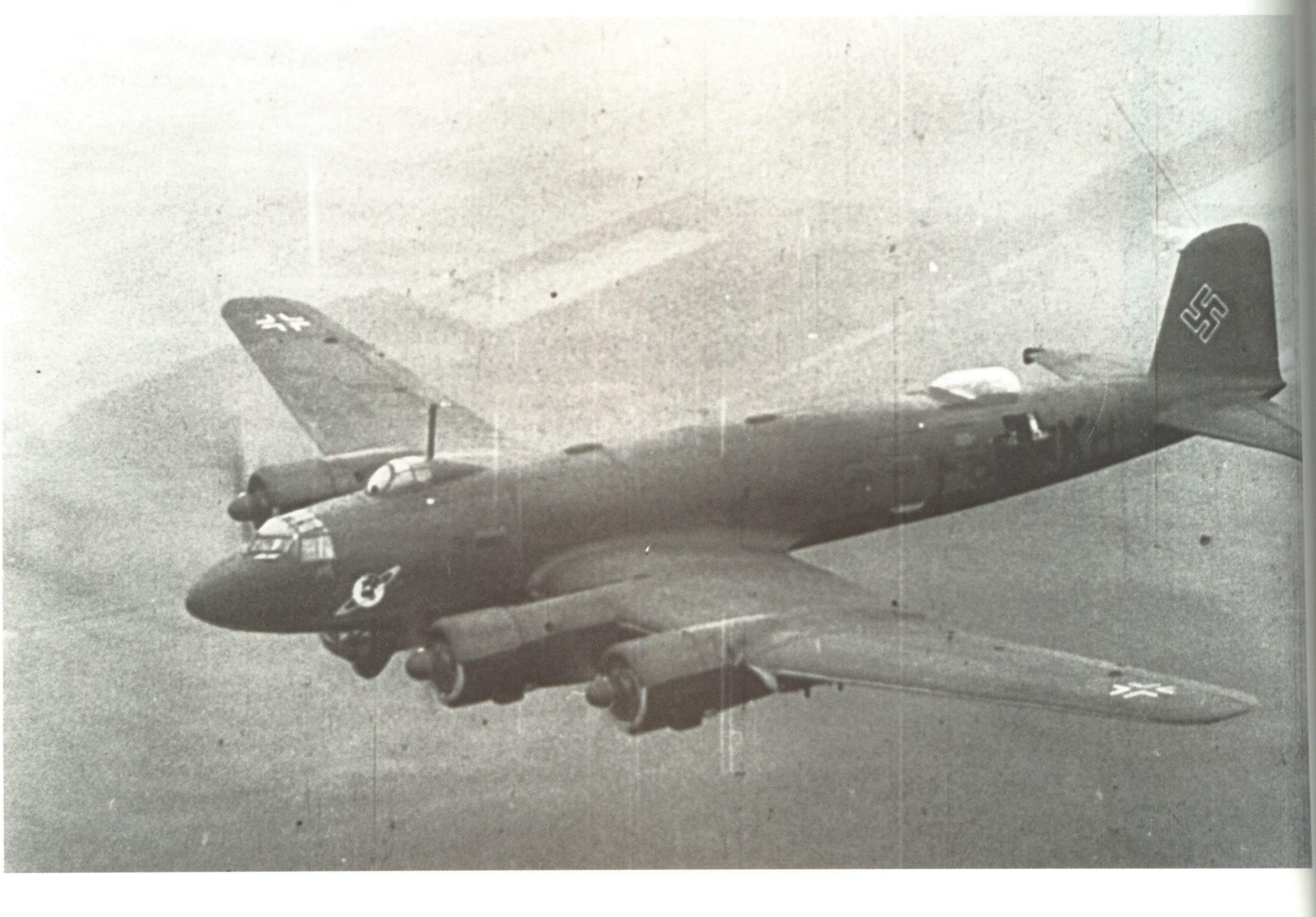


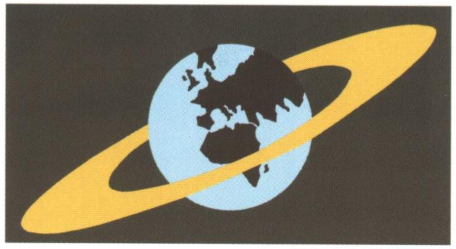
In the photograph (*ABOVE*) a crew receives its briefing, whilst (*LEFT*) crew members don three variations of flying helmet, the summer-weight LKp S 101, winter-weight LKp W 100 (or LKp W 101) and the lightweight summer version, LKp N 101. All wear the same K So/34 one-piece cotton flying suit with the SWp 734 10-30 Schwimmweste (life vest) and note how some crew wear their flying suits over their fleece-lined boots. Also visible lying on the ground around the crew are fuel hoses.



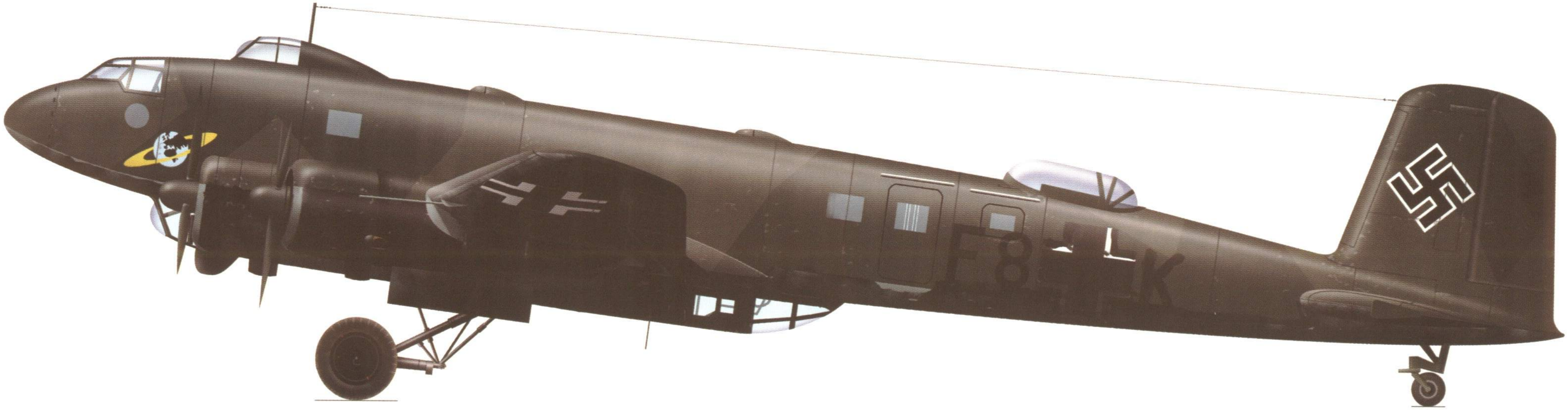


THIS PAGE: Two rare views of an unusually painted Fw 200 Condor believed to be a C-2 of I./KG 40 in-flight over France probably in 1941. The aircraft carries the 'World in a Ring' emblem of I./KG 40 and is finished in standard RLM 70/71 splinter pattern on its upper surfaces with a matt black water-based paint applied to the under surfaces. Furthermore the aircraft code, F8+KH, and the fuselage Balkenkreuz have been blacked down leaving only a portion of the white cross visible. This aircraft subsequently crashed at Oberkohlhofen, with Oberleutnant Heinz Helleberg and crew all killed.



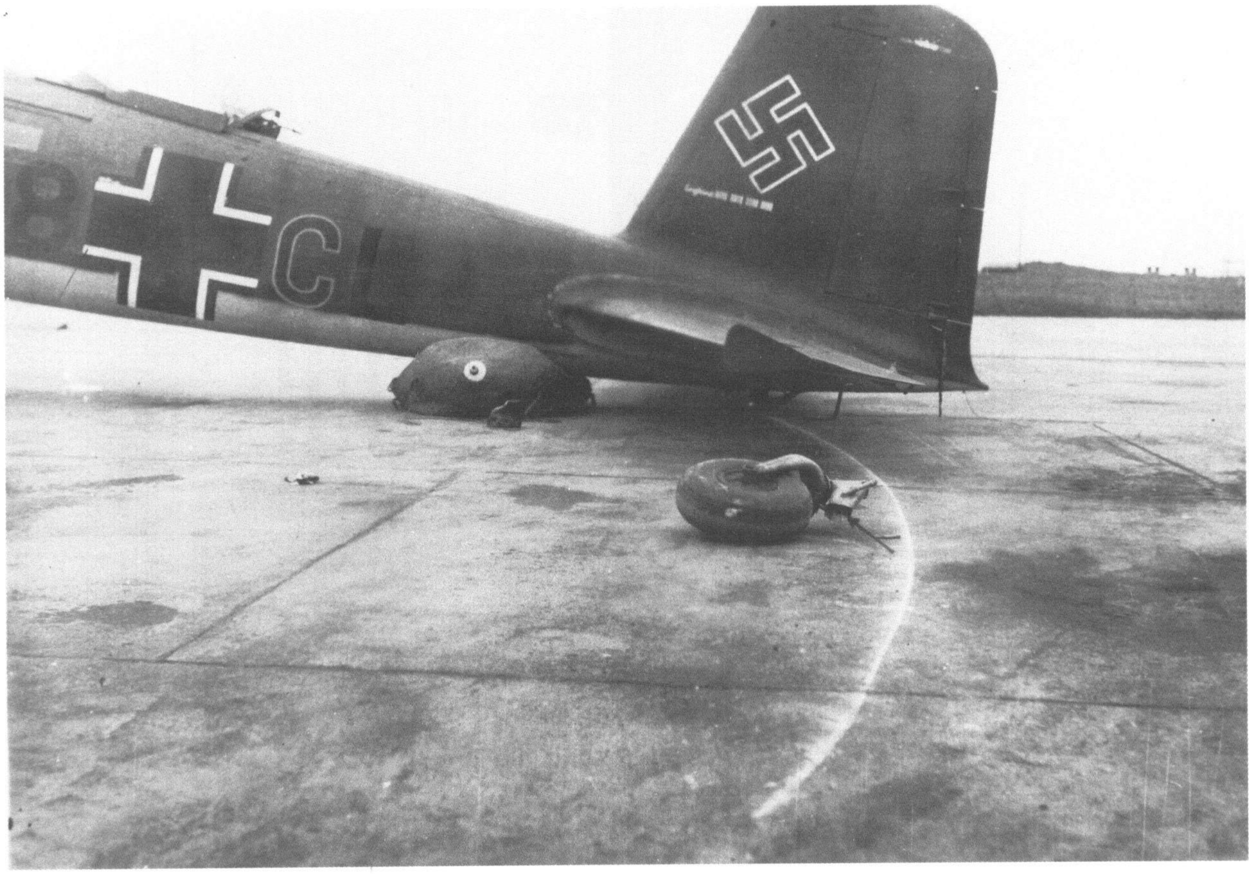


Emblem of KG 40



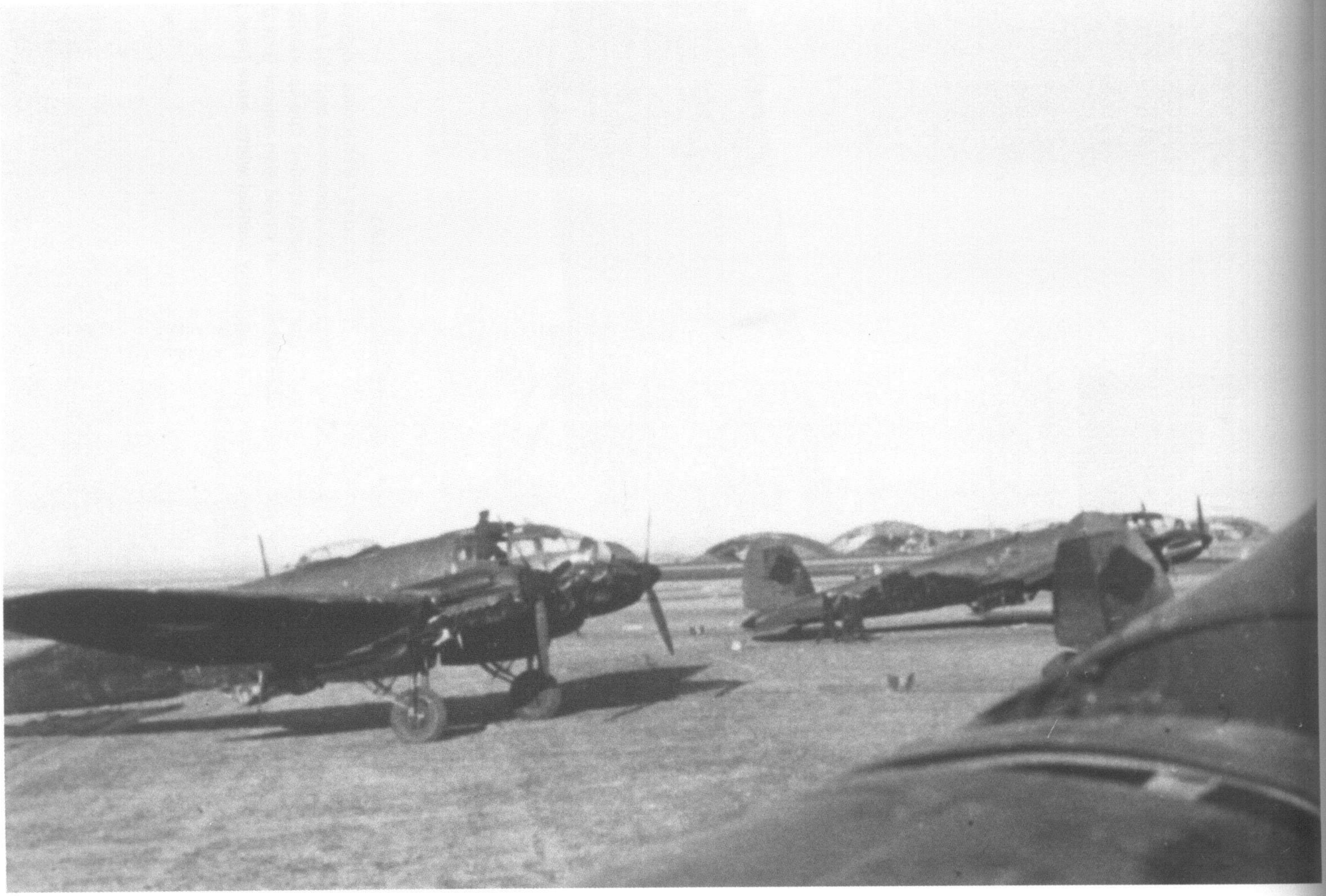
Focke-Wulf Fw 200 C-2 of I./KG 40, France, 1941

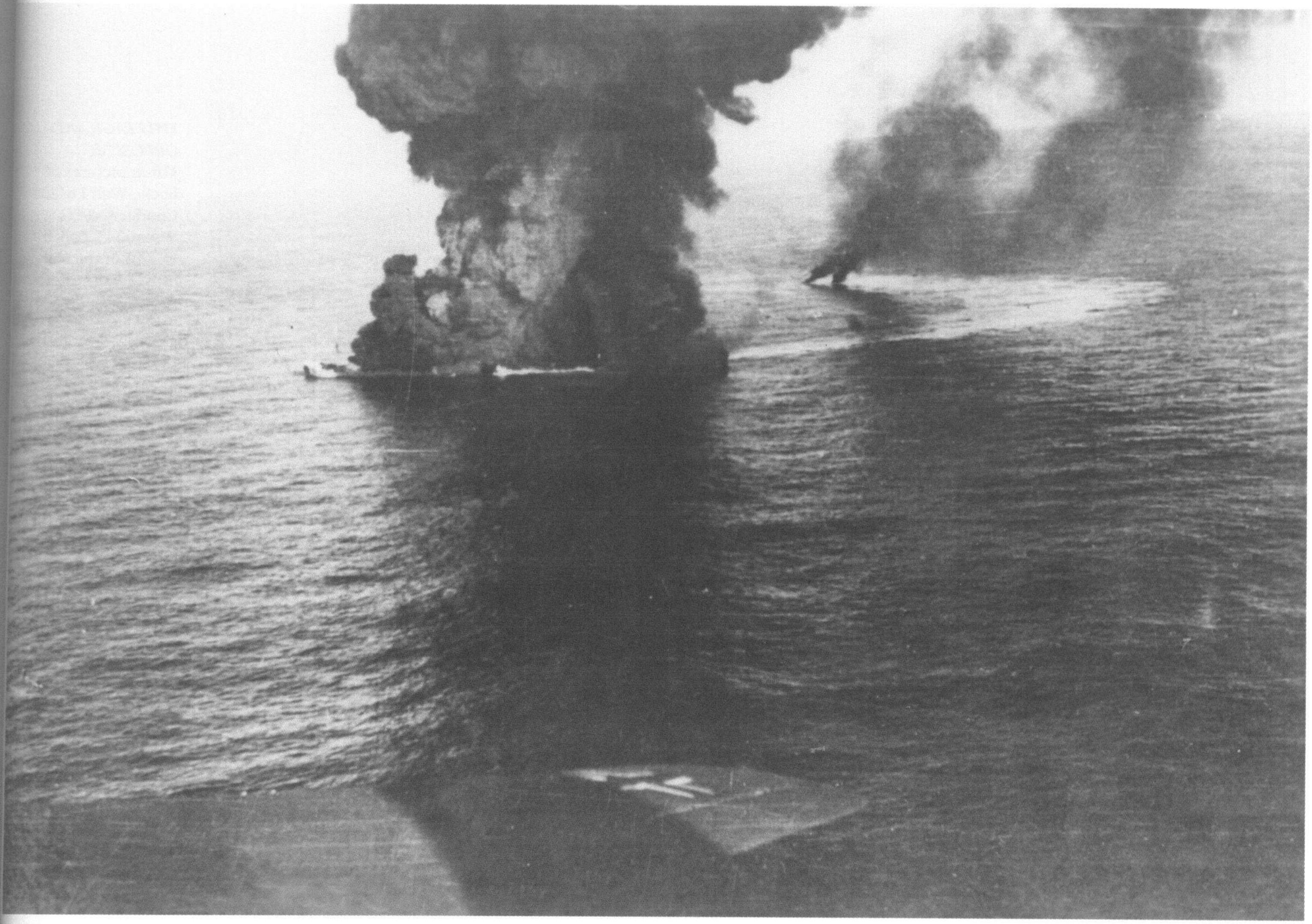
Powered by four BMW 132H engines this Fw 200 C-2 coded F8+KH was originally painted in the standard splinter pattern of RLM 72/73 with RLM 65 underneath. The aircraft was used for night operations and the undersides have been repainted in temporary black paint. It appears that on some parts of the aircraft, paint has been eroded due to operational conditions and the original 65 colour has begun to bleed through once more, especially under the nose. It would also appear that the front areas of the engine cowlings were not painted out although the Balkenkreuz and the letter 'K', originally painted white, have been painted out making them less obtrusive. The Hakenkreuz and KG 40 emblem remained untouched.

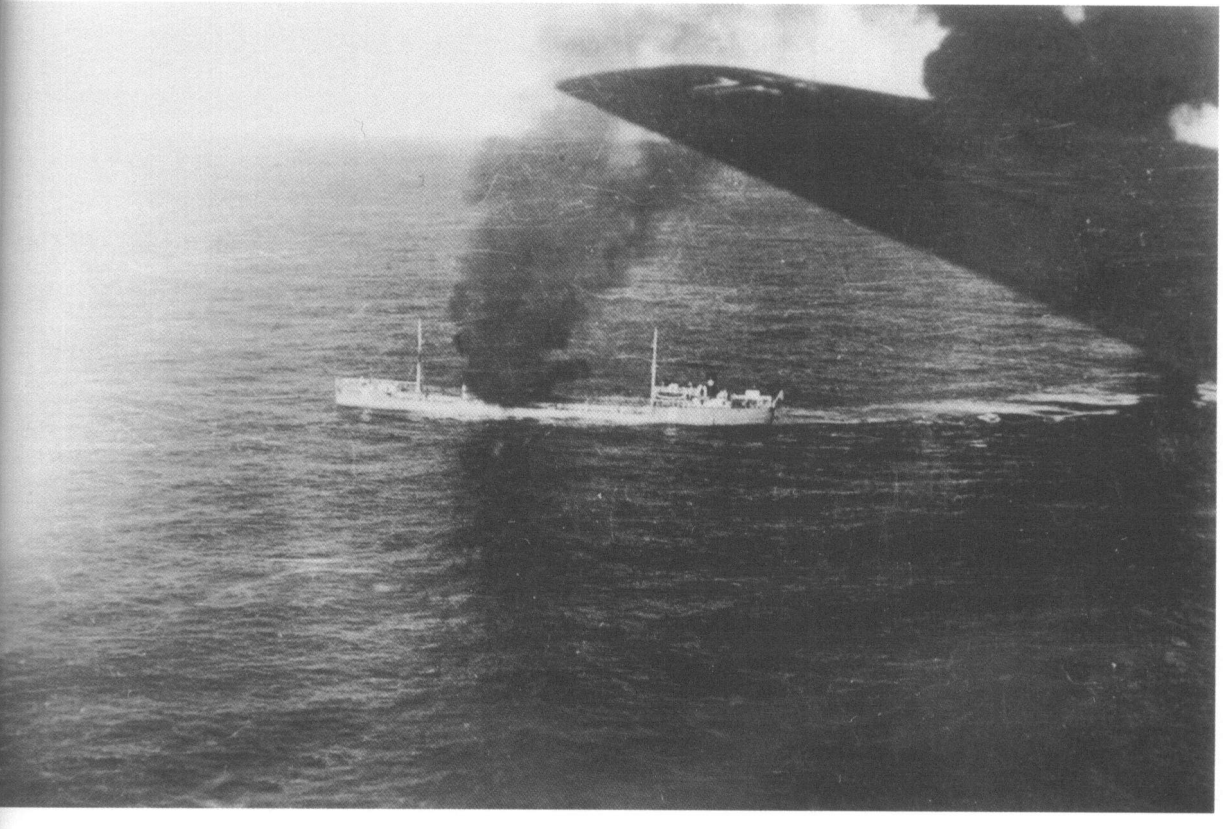


LEFT: A Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor C-3, W.Nr.0063, F8+CL, of 7./KG 40 seen following a heavy landing at Bordeaux on 20 October 1941. Note the score in the tarmac showing a ground loop. An inflatable lifting bag has been positioned under the rear fuselage prior to raising the aircraft. From the markings on the tail fin the Condor had conducted sixteen missions over England and had been credited with the sinking of one vessel. After repair she became F8+BR and was ditched in Storsdahlfjord on 22 February 1942 due to engine failure. Oberleutnant Karl Thiede and the crew were rescued.

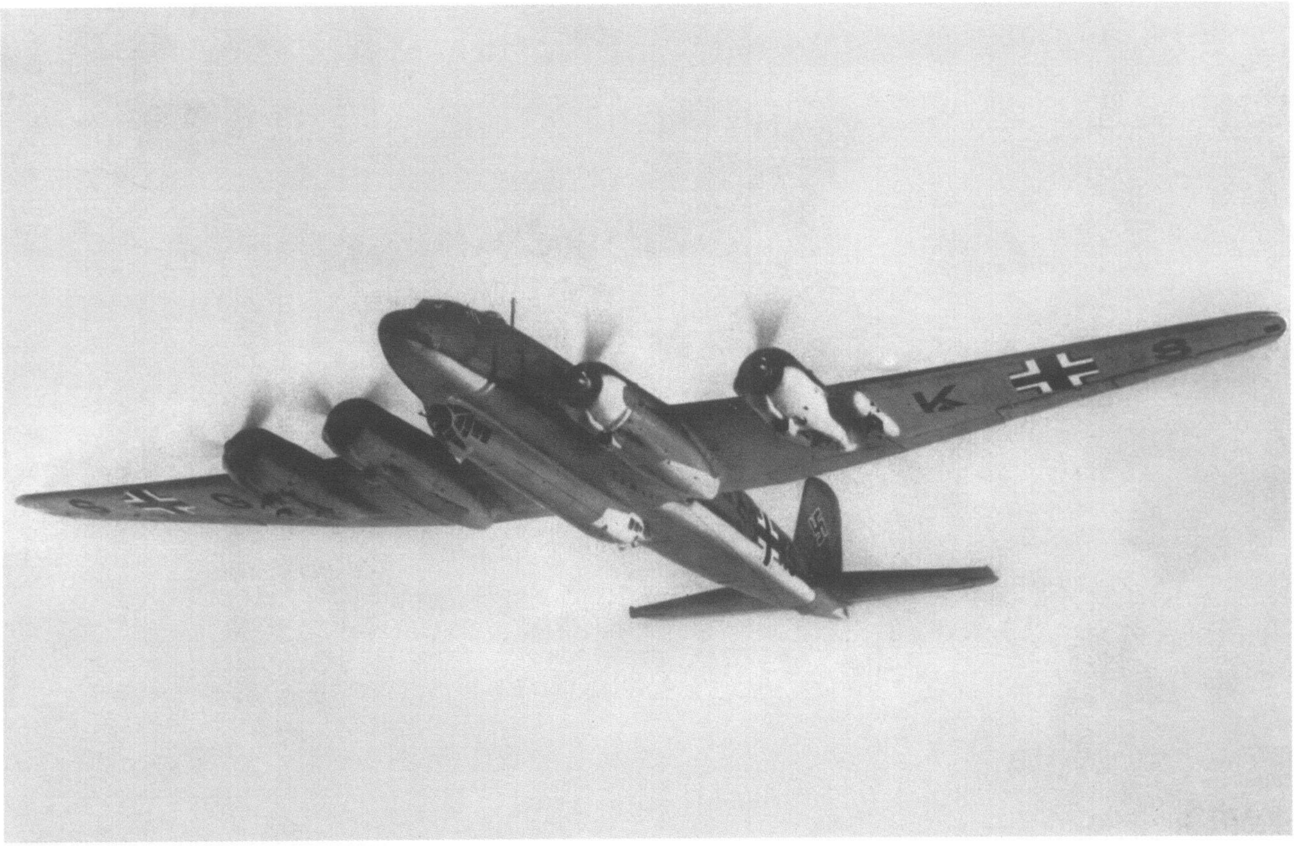
BELOW: Heinkel He 111s of 4./KG 26 bask in the sun at Aalborg in 1941. Note the matt black washable paint applied crudely to the undersides, aircraft codes and national markings for night operations.



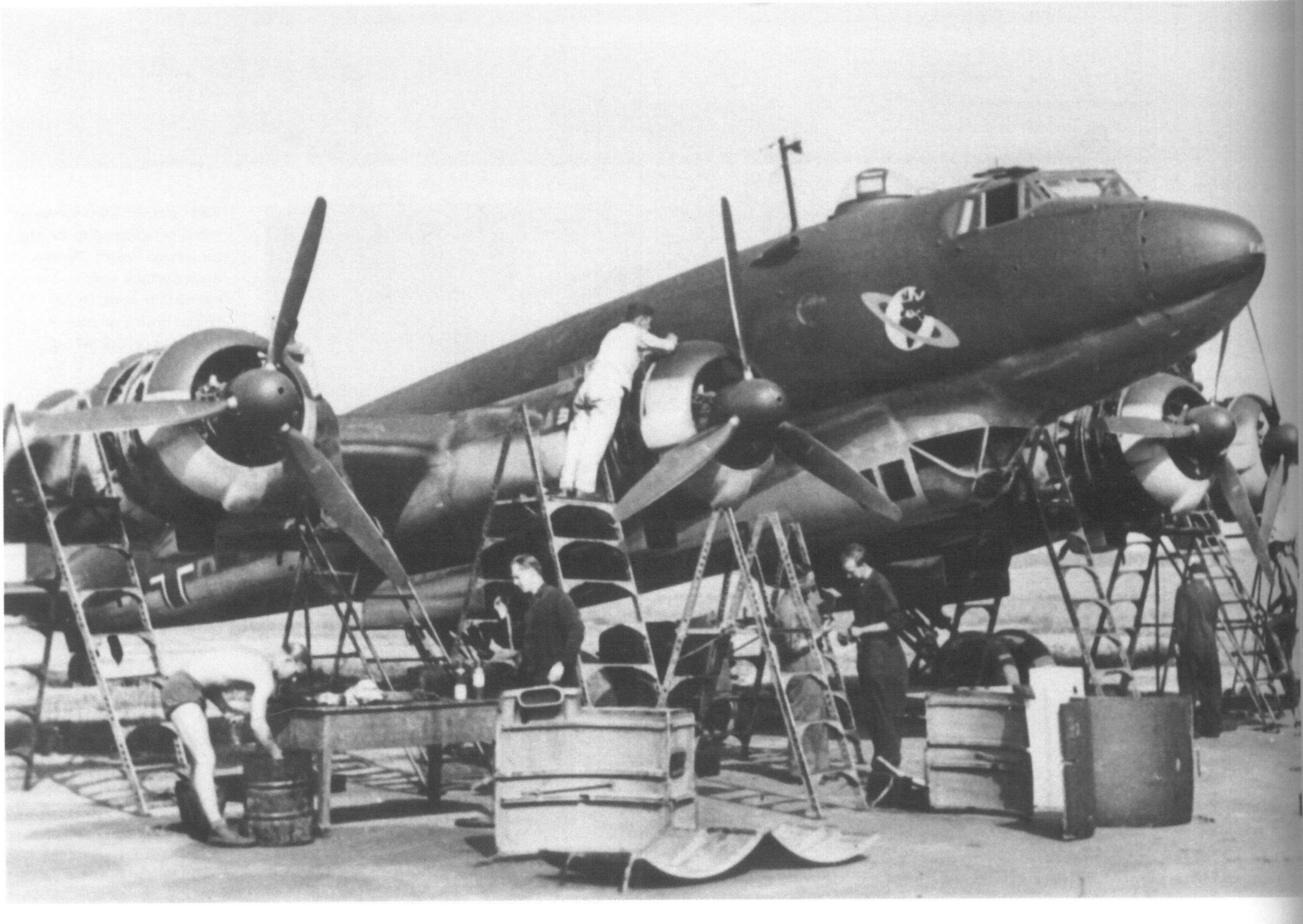


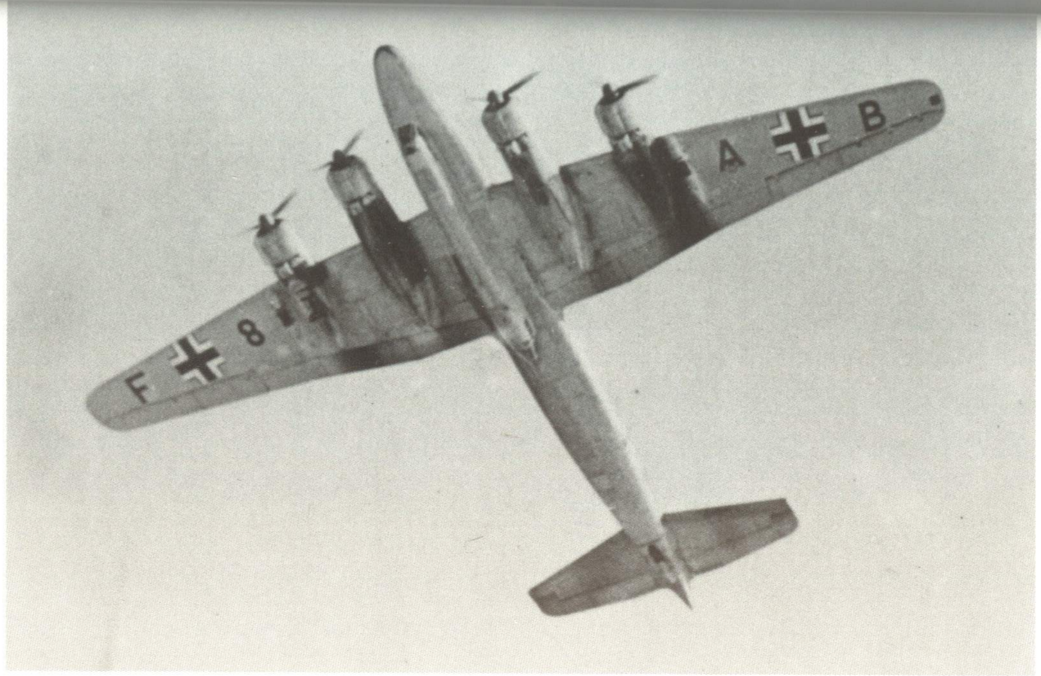


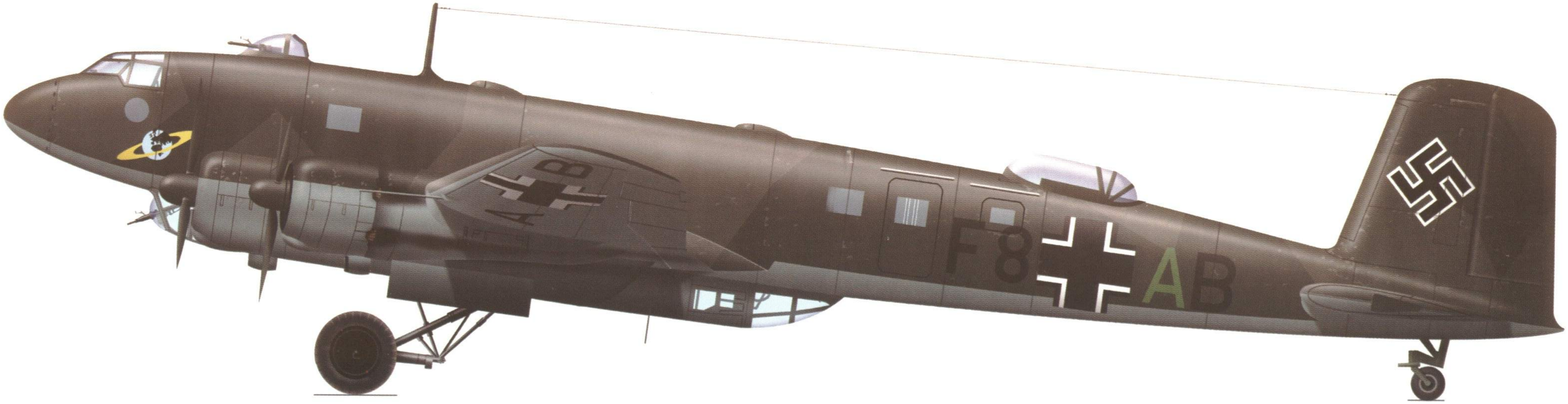
THIS PAGE: Two views of what is believed to be the merchant vessel 'Tunisia' under attack and eventually sunk by Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condors of KG 40 on 4 August 1941.



THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: Three pictures of Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor C-3/U2, W.Nr.0043, coded F8+AB of the Stab Flight of KG 40. (*LEFT*) shows the aircraft in-flight, in its original factory code SG+KS and (*BELOW*) undergoing thorough engine checks for its four BMW Bramo radial engines in September 1941. (*OPPOSITE PAGE*) shows the aircraft again in-flight, with final squadron codes and mission kill markings on the fin and rudder. The veteran Ritterkreuzträger, Hauptmann Fritz Fliegel was lost with his crew in this aircraft due to ships' flak in the Atlantic on 18 July 1941.

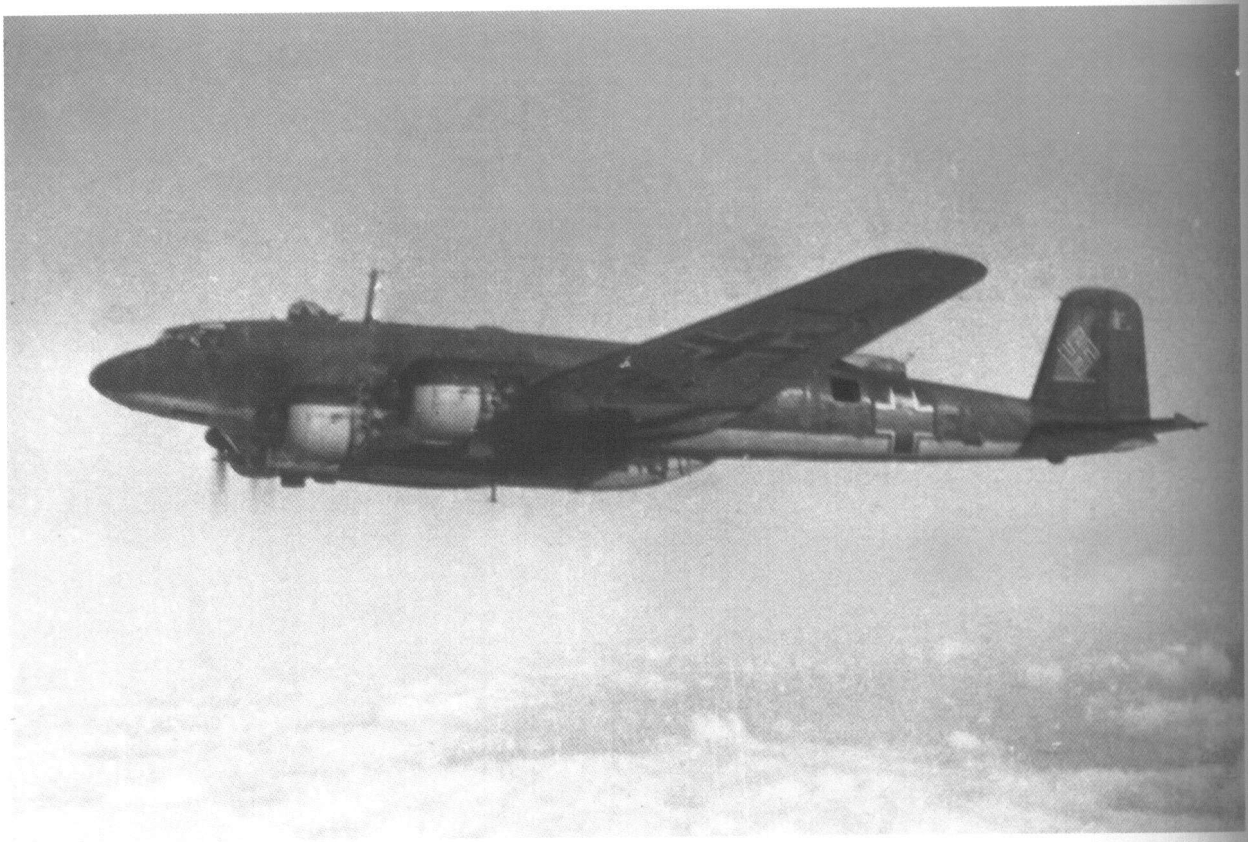




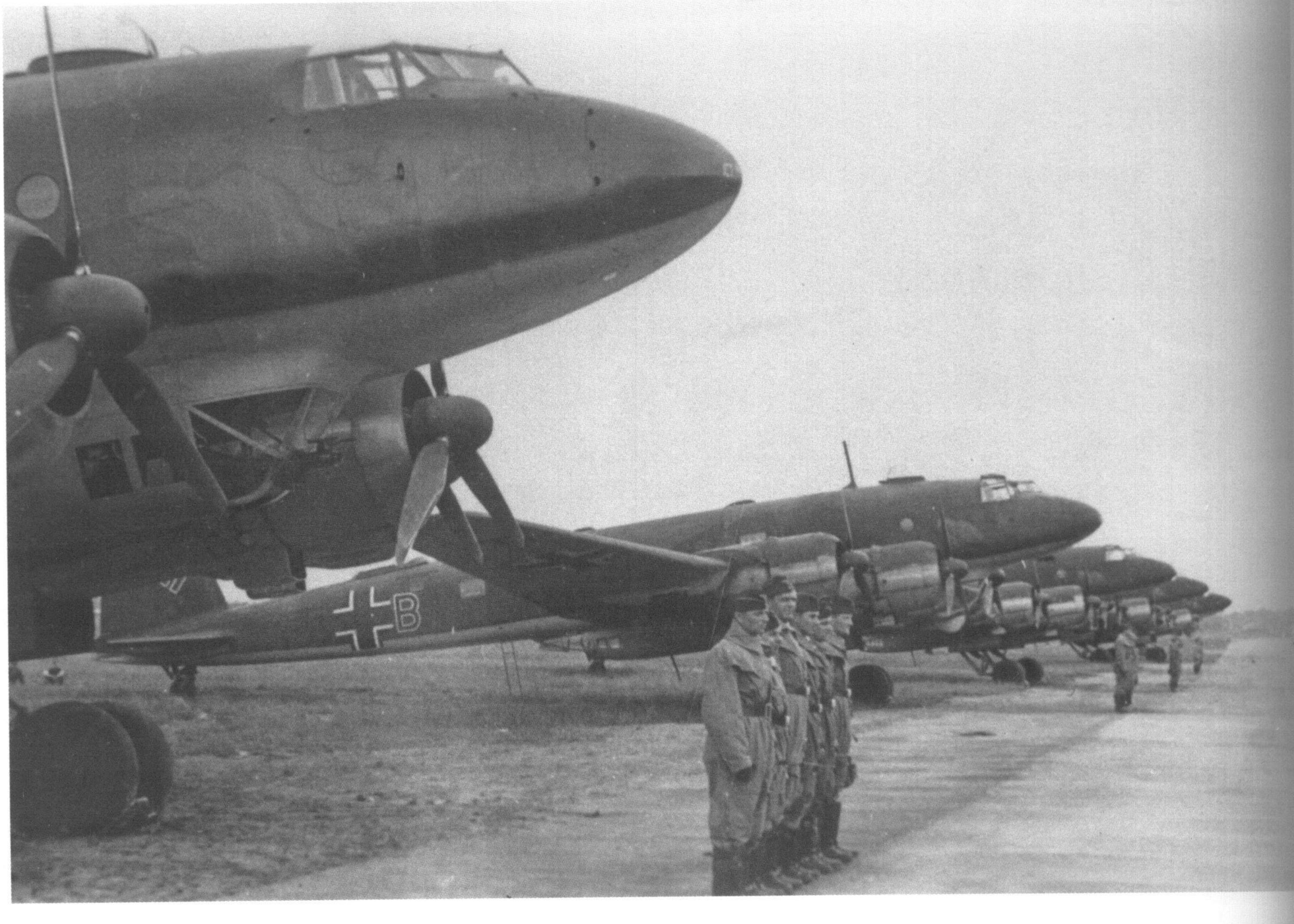


Focke-Wulf Fw 200, W.Nr.0043, F8+AB, C-3/U2 of Stab I./KG 40
This Fw 200 C-3/U2, W.Nr. 0043, coded F8+AB carried the standard splinter camouflage pattern in RLM 72/73 greens on the upper surfaces with RLM 65 light blue underneath. The full unit code of the aircraft was painted under the wings, with F8 either side of the Balkenkreuz on the starboard side and with 'A+B' on the port side. Note also the dark staining from the engine exhausts on the wings and flaps. The markings under the wing have been applied along the centre line of the main spar. The individual letter 'A' was painted in the Stab colour green and the 'World in a Ring' emblem of KG 40 was painted on the nose.

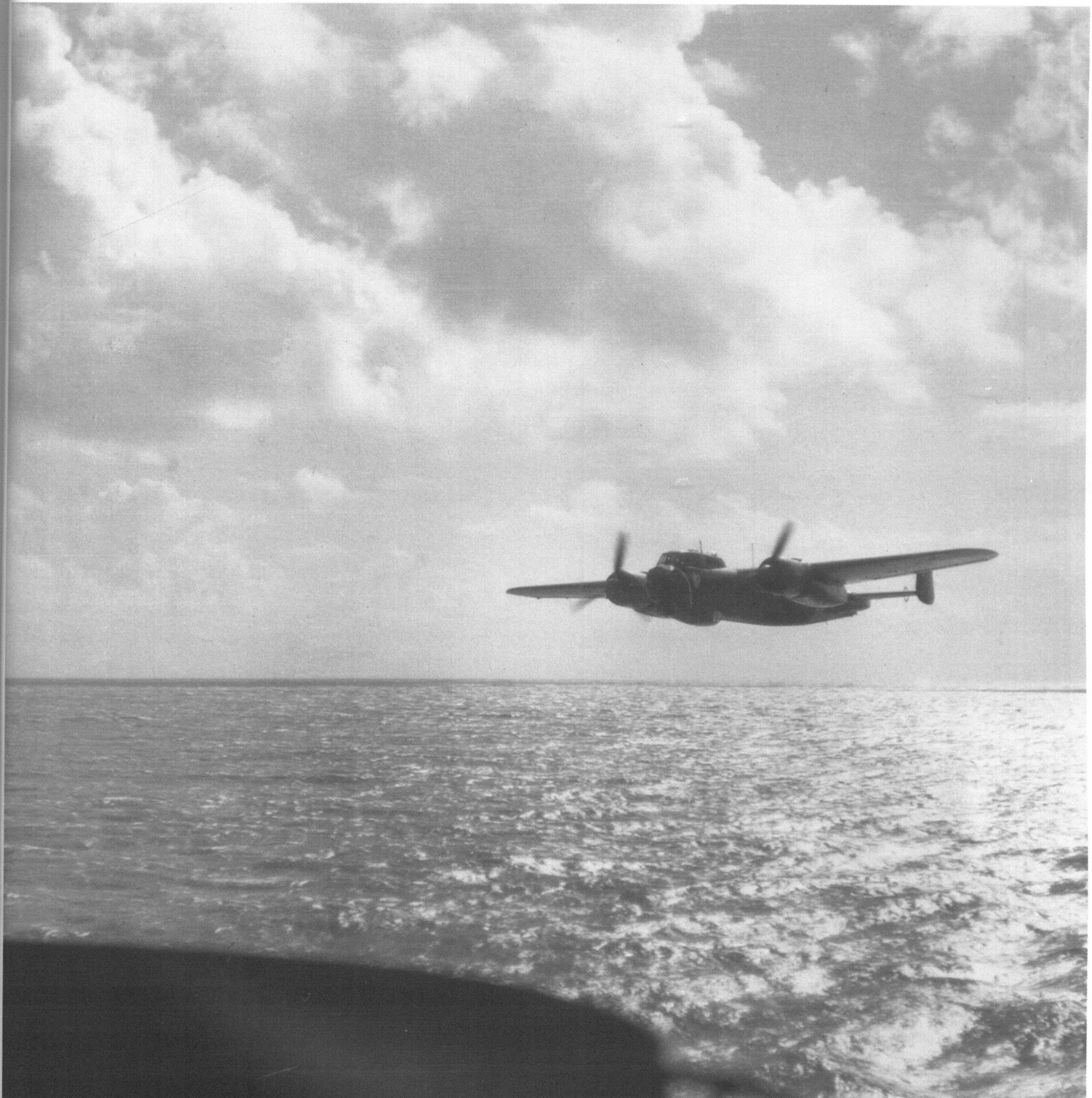
RIGHT: A Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor C-3 coded F8+FL, W.Nr. 0102 of 3./KG 40 cruises over the Irish Sea in November 1941. Built in early 1942, it suffered engine failure west of Ireland on 13 February 1942. Feldwebel Kurt Hinze was killed; Feldwebel Dern plus four crew were rescued by U-Boat.

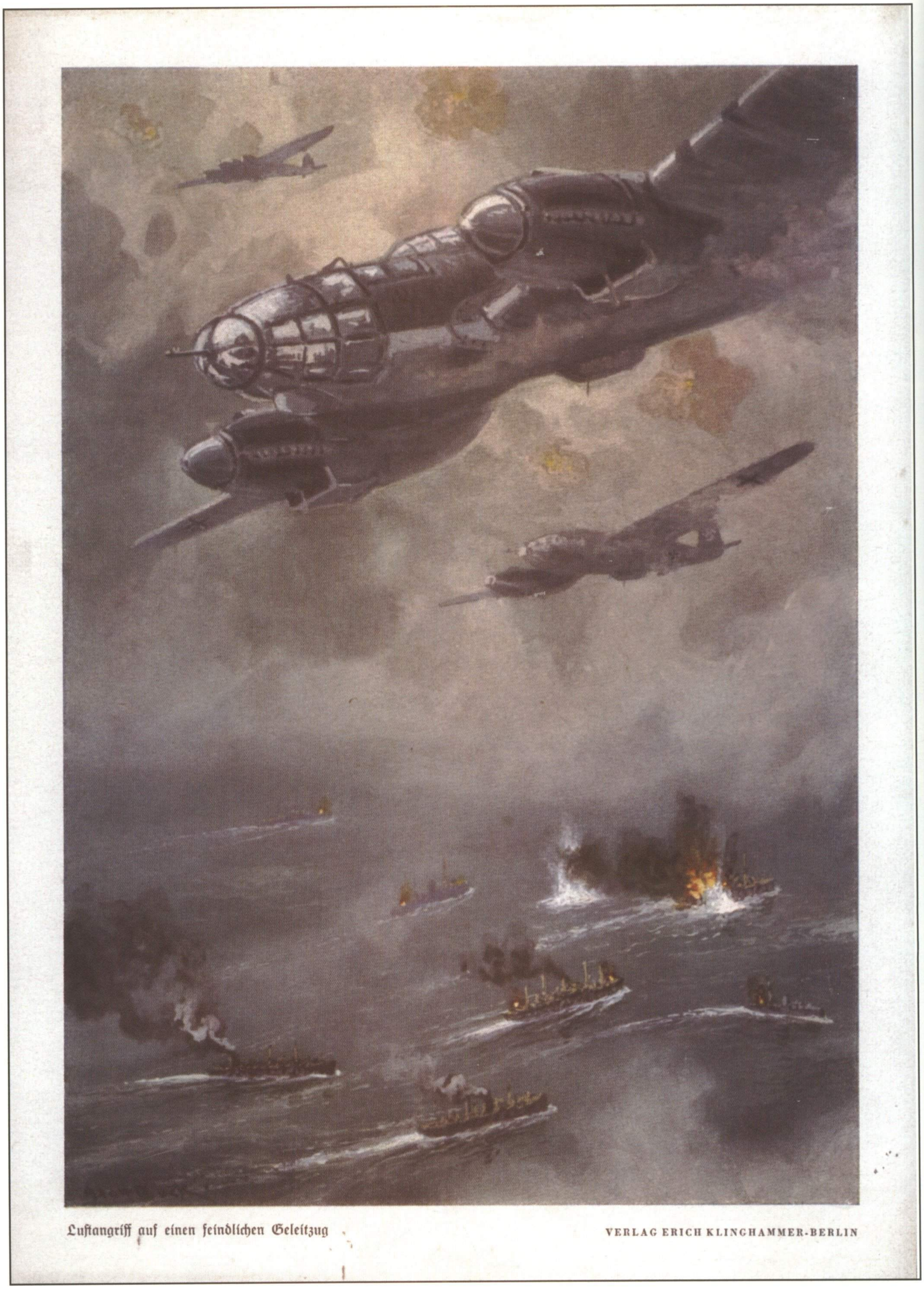


BELOW: Fw 200 Condor flight crews of I./KG 40 line up in front of their aircraft at Bordeaux-Merignac for an inspection in September 1941. Note the positioned propellers and absence of the 'world in a ring' emblem.



BELOW: Things to come...A Dornier Do 217 E of I./KG 2 flies a low pass astern of an axis vessel in the Bay of Biscay on 19 June 1942. Close inspection of the aircraft shows the 'Holzhammer' Geschwader emblem on the nose, which was a gloved hand holding a mallet within a shield. The unit's white diagonal nose band carried earlier by their Do 17 Zs can also be seen, though it is partly obscured by temporary matt black under-surfaces on this aircraft.





Luftangriff auf einen feindlichen Geleitzug

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A page from a contemporary wartime German propaganda publication depicting Heinkel He 111s attacking an enemy convoy.

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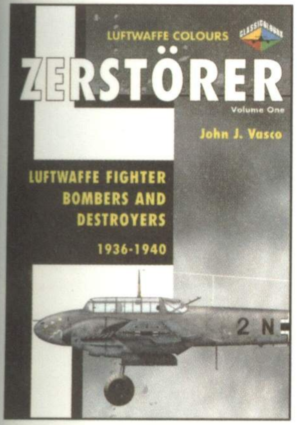
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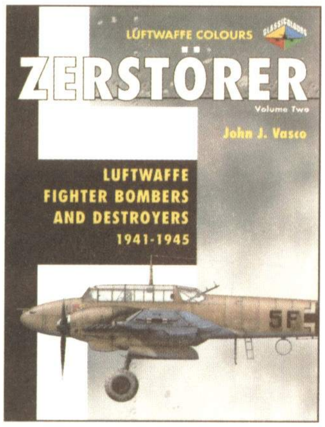
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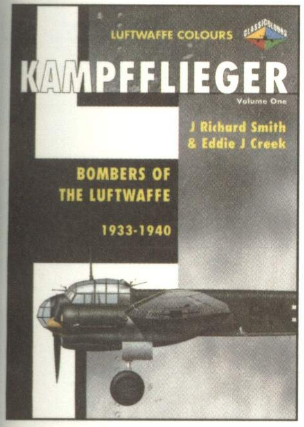
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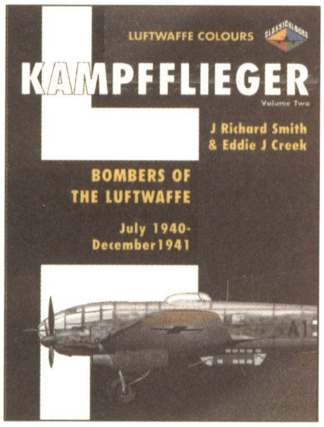
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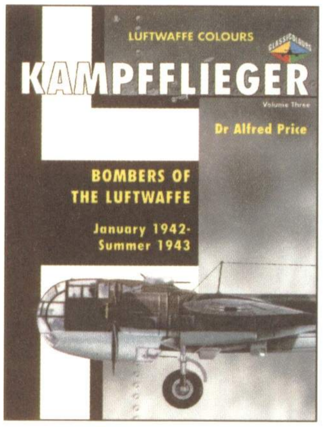
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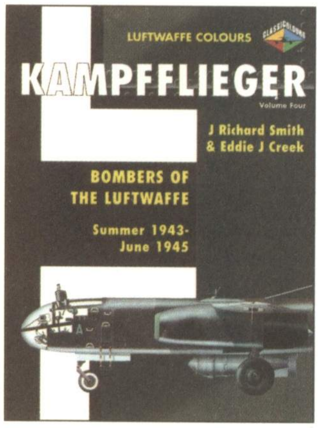
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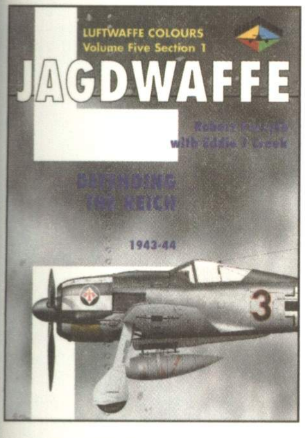
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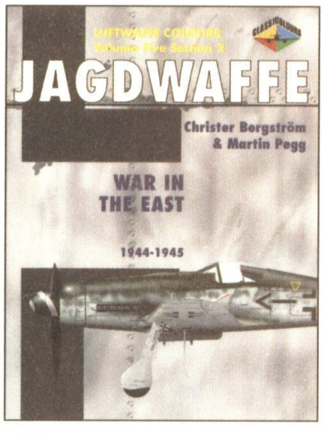
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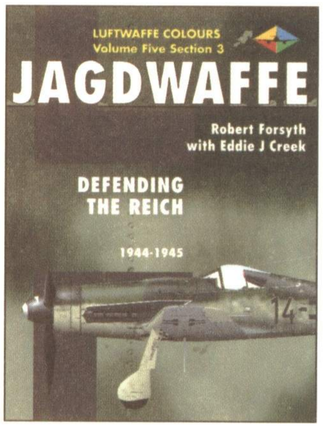
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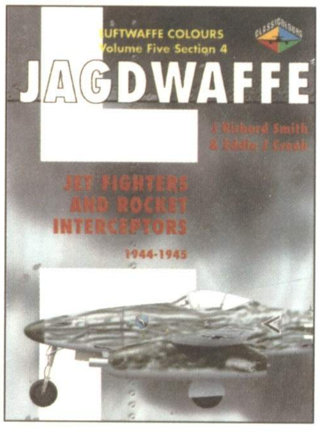
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